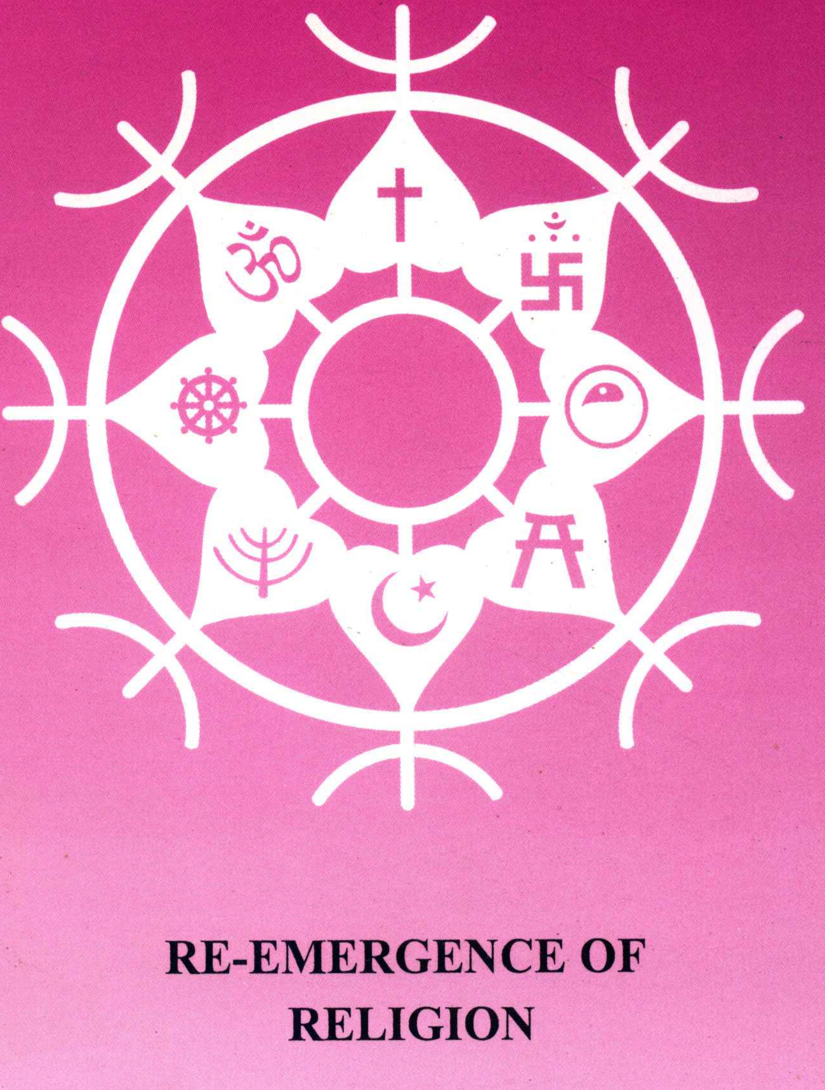
# JOURNAL OF
# DHARMA



## RE-EMERGENCE OF RELIGION

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# RE-EMERGENCE OF RELIGION

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Early in the 20th century, many scholars saw an evolutionary relationship of magic, religion, philosophy, and science, where the older ones were considered as primitive and replaced by more coherent and rational and sophisticated ways. As Bertrand Russell observed, "Religion is something left over from the infancy of our intelligence; it will fade away as we adopt reason and science as our guidelines."[2] While many intellectuals remain hostile to religion, the evolutionary relationship of magic, religion, philosophy, and science is generally discredited in the contemporary scholarship. People seem to realize that "The use of the word 'science' for 'everything that can be meaningfully said' constitutes an 'overrating of science'."[3] Though we live in a scientific and technological age, "We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched."[4]

Science does not have monopoly of truth. The artistic heritage as well as intellectual and philosophical contributions has always owed much to religious thought and symbolism. At a time when the convictions of billions do so much to shape the geopolitics and the survival of humanity on the planet, it is not wise to discount them as misguided delusions. Listening to great experiences and insights of religious traditions of humanity is a source of knowledge and to ignore it would be an unacceptable restriction on our listening and responding.

The re-emergence of religion into the public space is a cultural shock to many, who, like Russell, believed that science will eventually overturn and displace the influence of religious myths and beliefs. "The re-emergence of religious discourse," writes Sara Maitland, "seems to have caught many of us on the hop: baffled, irritated and uncomprehending. For over 250 years, Western democratic thinking has argued, and even fought for, the secularization of the public domain and the political arena... By the second half of the last century, indeed, one might have thought the battle was won... What I see instead is a faltering, a loss of faith, in the whole Enlightenment project."[5]

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[2] http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/bertrandru141329.html retrieved June 19, 2010

[3] Wittgenstein, *Nachlass*, The Bergen Electronic Version, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, MS 134, 145.

[4] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden, London: Routledge, 1922, 6.52.

The promise of science as a force for good has been challenged as it has shifted from a beneficial human enterprise to an instrument that works against people and the environment. Even when we enjoy the fruits of science and technology, we are increasingly alarmed by their destructive power. The secular humanist world was often merely a cover story for the technocratic corporate world. The development slogan has also to address the cry for justice. The world needs to regain its human face and it is impossible without the support of a divine realm.

The reasons for this religious comeback are manifold. It expresses both renewed individual quests for meaning in a secularized, materialistic world and a more collective search for identity in a world characterized by the uncertainties and insecurities of globalization and diversity.

While some have welcomed the re-emergence of religion as a necessary counterbalance to the excesses of materialism and technocratic corporate world, others have warned that this religious revival would subvert universal values, sow divisive and narrow identities, and trigger a broader backlash. In some instances, the re-emergence of religion also reflects in part the failure of the states, especially in the developing world, to provide and guarantee fundamental human rights for the majority of their populations. The 'theologization' of state power has also caused divisions and exploitation of the poor and the marginalised. Rulers join with the priests and particular religious interpretations to shore up their power and to suppress dissenting voices in the name of religion. When religion is merged with the state, human rights suffer. India is a country where religious diversity and religious tolerance are established in both law and custom. Since the 1960s, however, there has been the steady growth of militant ideologies. The religious fundamentalism and religion-based political parties challenge Indian heritage and culture. The re-emergence of true religious spirit should promote peace and harmony.

Following a religion relates to a fundamental way of living. Religion is something fundamental for believers not because it is scientifically tested and verified, but by virtue of the place it occupies in their lives. Religion and life are inseparable, for believers; it shows the basic character and spirit of their living. The world of the religious persons is different from those who have no faith. They see religious significance in the very existence of their life in the world. It is the religious point of view that gives them the ultimate meaning of life. For believers, religion is the way of making sense of their lives.

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[5] Sara Maitland, "In Place of Enlightenment," *Index on Censorship*, April 2004, 8.

Religious life is not merely a practice of certain techniques to develop certain dispositions, but practices to join in and to go on responsibly and creatively following a religion. To believe, I need understanding, though the understanding is characterised by faith and love rather than evidence and logic. As in other aspects of our lives, both reason and passion are involved in making an ongoing commitment to this fundamental way of living, i.e., being a religious person. Religion is a fundamental human way of living in the world in relation to fellow human beings and God; it also shows who we are and how we ought to live. Religious beliefs are, by nature, not available for empirical verification. That does not mean that they are not significant. Though faith seeks understanding (*fides querens intellectum*), in religion a believer typically believes in order to understand (*credo ut intellegam*) the truths about God. Religion is a way of life lived by believers and not a problem to be solved either by science or by philosophy. Religion, philosophy, and science are joint ventures of nature and nurture. As Pope John Paul II remarked in the opening words of his celebrated encyclical, *fides et ratio*, "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth."[6]

Religion, like science, is a fire. Both are vital for human life, enhancing the quality of life, but can also provoke hatred and destruction. Humanity cannot choose between science and religion or displace either of them. We need both science and religion "to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace."[7] As religion is part of our natural history, religion has come to stay as long as we live and make sense of our life here on earth. *Journal of Dharma* dedicates this issue on "Re-Emergence of Religion" for furthering the Fellowship In Religious Experience (FIRE) and harmony of life.

Jose Nandhikkara, *Chief Editor*

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[6] John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Rome: 1998.

[7] The Earth Charter, http://www.earthcharter.org

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# REVIVAL OF MYSTICISM AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER IN RELIGION

**V. F. Vineeth***

## 1. Introduction

Mysticism defies all definitions. This is mainly because it is not rational by nature. It is knowing God, the Ultimate Reality, by 'touch' rather than by thought. Though the expression 'touching God' may sound idiotic and contradictory, the mystics are fond of using expressions such as 'to touch God', 'to taste and see that the Lord is good' (Ps. 34:8). Here touching and tasting would primarily mean 'to experience'. If God is God, the Ultimate Reality, the really Real (*pāramārtikasatya*),[1] He awfully transcends all the powers and faculties of knowledge. Hence, knowing God who is by nature the Infinite and the Immortal one, by senses or mind, which are totally plunged into structures of limitation, is as foolish as trying to pour out the waters of a sea into a child's playing pot. Though this audacity is obviously meaningless, mystics sometimes try to do this, or are led by the Spirit to try this, and prefer to remain baffled and tight-lipped, in silent admiration and salient wonder, even though they understand very little. But during these auspicious moments they do embrace more, experience more and desire to speak less and do more. Thus, mysticism is not a matter of crude obscurantism or fanaticism, over assertion of the thinking self, but a melting of the inner consciousness to be fused with the Divine, about which, St. Teresa of Avila says: "This prayer is a sleep of the faculties."[2]

It is rather an experience of wonder, unending amazement, held deep in one's own heart than in mind, at times suffused with utter darkness of

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[1] Sankaracharya, *Vedanta Sutra Bhashya*, I.i.4, 1.iii.1, in George Thibaut, trans. *Sacred Books of the East*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Vol. 34, 38, 1890, 1896.

[2] *Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila*, Vol. I, *The Book of Her Life*, Carmel International Publishing House, Trivandrum: 2001, 108-109.

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suffering, yet, other times enlightened by the radiant rays of that One who is by nature light. Mysticism is not at all a religion of uncertainty much less of anonymity, but a certain touch of the Divine, who is all in all, but for the mystic his/her beloved Lord as an abiding presence and guiding star. It is an experience of love and intimacy, faith and surrender, a becoming process of fusion or interpenetration of two consciousnesses, the Divine and human. The mystics, therefore, know more by becoming than by learning, by doing rather than preaching, by one's own heart rather than the mind. Whether the soul remains in suspense or supplication, silence or utterance, for the mystic, all is prayer and the sum and substance of this prayer-life is an attitude of self-surrender to the Beloved whom the soul has opted as her own.

Do we see the signs of mysticism in the world of today? Do we see at least the vestiges of such mystical theology emerging and beginning to live in our contemporary world? I think there are many positive signs to think so. Before we come to see the re-emergence of contemporary trends of mysticism, let us briefly see some of the mystical traditions, India and the world at large have already gone through, on the threshold of which this re-emergence is made possible.

## 2. The Ancient Roots of Mysticism in India

### 2.1. The Vedic Mysticism of the *Ekam Sat*

The Vedic people were mystics by nature. They had many gods, among whom many were nature gods, the elements for example. Thus, we have the Sun God (*Sūryabhagavan*), the fire-god (*Agnidevah*), the water-goddess (*Jaladevata*), the goddess earth (*Bhoomidevi*), the air-god (*Vayudevah*), and the heaven-god (Indra), the god of upper region. All the elements are naturally the best symbols of the Holy Spirit abiding in us and Jesus makes reference to them as the symbols of the Holy Spirit. For example, "The water I give…" (Jn. 4:14); "I am the bread of life" (Jn. 6:35), a reference to earth: "I came to put fire on earth" (Lk. 12:49); and finally he breathes (air) and says 'receive my spirit' (Jn. 20:22). Our ancestors felt this close presence of God in nature, and called the symbols as gods, i.e., divine by nature. They are the architects of eco-spirituality. They saw gods where we fail to see gods. What is meant was: "learn to see the divine presence in nature whose architect is directly God, and not human hands." They were mystics by nature. In spite of those numerous gods, they had the power to transcend all of them and the vision to say:

The One Being (*ekam sat*), the wise call by many names.[3] Regarding the elements they said:

> The earth is like honey to all beings, and all beings are honey for this earth. The shining, immortal person who is in this earth and with reference to one's self, this shining immortal person who is in the body, he, indeed is just the Self. This is immortal, this is Brahman, this is all.[4]

Whatever be the deficiencies in their thinking, they saw the fingertips of God being imprinted on all beings on the earth and the order (*Rta*) and harmony which He has placed in nature. Indeed, the One Being formed them all.

### 2.2. The Upanishadic Mysticism of the Abiding Atman

The one *Sat* which alone was in the beginning was later seen as the One abiding in human hearts. God is now called the *Atman*, the innermost Self within. The enlightening conversation between the sage Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi is a brilliant example for this vivid shift of accent from the transcendent One to the Immanent One, guiding us from within:

> It is not for love of a husband that a husband is loved, but rather for the love of the atman (the Self). Nor is it for love of a wife that a wife is loved, but rather for the love of the atman… Then O Maitreyi, it is the atman that should be seen, listened to, thought about and deeply meditated upon. It is only by seeing, hearing, thinking about and deeply meditating upon the Atman that all this is known.[5]

The supreme Self abides within us as our inner controller and the ultimate self is to be experienced and realized:

> Realizing through self-contemplation the primal God, difficult to be seen, deeply hidden, set in the cave of the heart, dwelling in the deep, the wise leave behind both pain and pleasure (*Katha Up*. I.2.12).

Search into this atman needs constant effort, undying spirit of austerity (*tapas*) and sacrifice. Therefore, the same *Upanishad* continues:

> The one who has not turned away from wickedness, who has no peace, who is not concentrated, whose mind is restless – he cannot realize the atman, who is known by wisdom (*Katha Up*. II.24).

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[3] *Rg Veda*, X.164.46

[4] *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*, II.5.1.

[5] Brah. Up. II.4.4-5.

This upanishadic search for depth was later continued by the sage Patanjali, the author of the *Yogasutra*, in which he deals with the steps of meditation, as *ashtangayoga.*[6]

### 2.3. The Agamic Mysticism of *Bhakti* traditions

The word *agama* means what has 'come' (*agam*) to us, namely what has been handed over to us by tradition. *Agamas* are very important post-vedic texts, mostly sectarian and devotional. There are three sets of *agama* texts, representing three important sects. They are in the name of three popular gods or goddess, such as, Vishnu, Shiva and *Sakti*. Though the Sanskrit word *agama* is a common term applicable to all the three sects, each particular sect has its own distinguished titles for their devotional literature. The *agama* literature, probably commencing from the fifth century CE could be seen as a positive response by inspired saints who wanted to promote and live a life of Bhakti. The Upanishadic search for the Absolute about whom the only valid testimony is "*neti*, *neti*" (not this, not this),[7] and the arid philosophy of Buddhism and its all embracing *sunya* (void), the people of India once again turned to the visible gods with name and form, with rituals, recitals and hymns. This is the inner force of the *agama* dynamics and the content of their literature. The net result was the rise of many important temples in the name of their gods all over India.

A sea of devotional mystical literature, hymns and *bhajans* were readily accepted by the believing people of India. These *bhakti* traditions and their chantings were very much appealing to the common people who remained absorbed in their union with the personal gods or goddesses, are still very much alive in the country.

### 2.4. The *Philokhalia* Mysticism of the Eastern Churches

The *agamic* tradition more or less coincides with the time of Desert Fathers' writings, which were later summarized and printed in Russia under the title *Philokhalia*, love for goodness, a tradition which continued from the fourth to fourteenth century of the first Millennium. During this period certain forms of oriental mysticism was developed, of which the so-called 'prayer of the heart' or Hesychiast tradition of prayer and meditation became very famous, especially because of the book, *The Way of the Pilgrim.* This is taken from the *Philokhalia* writings and presented in the form of the search of a pilgrim to learn how to pray always. An 'elder'

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[6] See V. F. Vineeth, *Yoga of Spirituality*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2000.

[7] *Brhadaranyka Upanishad* IV.5.15.

(equivalent to a *guru*), whom the pilgrim eventually meets, teaches him "the prayer of the heart" using a *mantra* taken from the Gospel of Jesus, namely, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." The pilgrim was later told by the elder, that he has to synchronize his heart beat with the recital of the *mantra* he has chosen. Hence the name 'the prayer of the heart'! The word '*hesychia*' is also worth noting, because it means serenity or tranquillity, a natural result of true meditation or meditative recital of the *mantra*. It is now relevant to remember how Patanjali, when he presented the eight steps of meditation, named the last or the eighth step *Samadhi*, equanimity, very similar to serenity or *hesychia*.[8]

## 3. Trends in Western Mysticism

The western church, after producing several martyrs dying for Christ during the first three centuries of Christianity in the Roman Empire, has produced many famous saints who gave solid base for and produced inspirational literature on Christian mysticism. The early authors and champions of mysticism in the western church were St. Augustine (CE 354-430), St. Benedict (d.ca.547) and St. Bernard of Clairvaux (CE 1090-1153). St. Benedict is known as the Father of Mysticism and Contemplative Prayer in the church, especially because the Benedictine order he founded became a powerful movement and institution for the spread of mystical prayer in the church all over the world. This was followed by St. Dominic (1170-1221), the founder of Dominican order (1216), and especially by Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), a mystic and theologian of high repute. Later, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of Jesuit Order gave a new thrust to mysticism, combining it with the timely action of defending the Christian faith.

In the Middle Ages, the West produced great mystic saints like Francis of Assisi and Claire who inaugurated a distinct form of life in utter poverty, perfectly relying only on God in profound faith, which is the inner core of contemplative prayer and mysticism. At the beginning of the modern era, the West again produced great saints who were champions of mystical theology, such as St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), St. Teresa of

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[8] Recently, Cherian Eapen, the president of Roy International Children's Foundation (RIC) has published all the five volumes of *Philokhalia*, both in English and Malayalam in an excellent printing and binding. These volumes, each one about thousand pages were sent freely to many ashrams, monasteries and convents which foster contemplative prayer life. See Cherian Eapen, *Philokhalia*, Vol. I-V, Kottayam: DC Books, 2006-2009.

Avila (1515-1582) and two centuries later St. Therese of Lissieux, known as Little Flower (1873-1897). All of them were Carmelites continuing the legacy of Mt. Carmel, beginning from 900 BCE. The mystical works of these saints are much in demand today.

### 3.1. Contemporary Appeal for Mysticism and Contemplative Prayer

#### 3.1.1. A Shift of Accent from Rational to Contemplative Thinking

Contemporary appeal for mysticism has several negative and positive seeds at its background. The triumph of philosophy and science in the world made wonderful achievements. In the modern philosophy, there was a shift of accent from God to the humans and it placed human being at the centre of thinking. Even Heidegger, who is acclaimed to be a philosopher 'mystic', hardly speaks about God. But his profound thinking certainly has a 'mystical' appeal in the sense that he is seeing the invisible Being (*das Sein*) in all beings in the world (*das Seiendes*). The focus of his thinking is not what we see, but what we do not see. He also uses several symbols from the Gospel to describe this relationship between the humans and beings in the world; for example, the human being is the shepherd and the beings are the sheep and the humans build a house for being which is thinking, where the beings feel at home. It is a very secular philosophy reflecting the relationship between God and the humans. But we notice a different style of language, a definite shift from the abstract style of philosophy to a concrete philosophy of 'touch' and experience of being or the 'thing' in front of you, as related to you, speaking to you, as beckoning and calling your renewed attention and love that it may feel at home with you.[9] This is what we call eco-spirituality, to create an *oikos*, house for us all, to dwell in harmony and rhythm. He was a lover of nature, preferred to live in the silence and serenity of black-forests in Bavaria, giving up invitations from universities of Berlin and other cities in Germany.

Mysticism has always fostered love for nature. Ashrams and ancient monasteries in Europe have always preferred a natural, eco-friendly and serene habitat for fixing up a place of their dwelling on earth, on high mountains or river-banks. Mysticism is very much related to nature and the 'green' garment with which our Mother Earth is dressed up. St. John of the Cross, a famous mystical theologian, wrote in his *Spiritual Canticle*:

O woods and thickets

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[9] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time), Tubingen, 1927, 10 Aufl, 1963.

> Planted by the hand of my Beloved!
> O green meadow,
> Coated, bright, with flowers,
> Tell me, has He passed by you?[10]

John says in his commentary:

> It is noteworthy that she (the soul) deliberately says "By the hand of my beloved." Although God often acts through the hand of another – as through those of angels and men – he never created, nor does He carry on this work of creation by any other hand than his own. This reflection on creatures, this observing that they are things made by the very hand of God, her Beloved, strongly awakens the soul to love him.[11]

And the nature responds:

> Pouring out a thousand graces,
> He passed these groves in haste;
> And having looked at them,
> With His image alone,
> Clothed them in beauty.[12]

William Blake, a secular author of our times, writes on mysticism:

> To see a world in a grain of sand
> And a heaven in a wild flower,
> Holy infinity in the palm of your hand
> And eternity in an hour.[13]

Though neither God nor religion is mentioned here, a believing person does see the finger prints of God in these lines. This reminds me of a text from *Bhagavad Gita* which says:

> All this cosmos is pervaded
> By me in the form of the human;
> In me all beings must subsist
> Although in them I never rest.[14]

A renewed interest in the works and the world of mysticism is obviously visible in the contemporary world. I have already quoted from the poem of St. John of the Cross. All his main works are commentaries that he wrote to his poems. A contemporary edition of the *Complete Works of John of the Cross*, running to 740 pages, published in 1964 in the USA (and its revised second edition in 1996), has to say in its Foreword:

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[10] *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Trivandrum: Carmel Publishing House, 1996, "The Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 4, 432.

[11] *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, 433.

[12] *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Stanza 5, 434.

[13] William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*, l.1.

[14] *Bhagavad Gita*, IX:4.

> *Interest in St. John of the Cross's writings was never greater than in our day*; ... In every age the classics are translated anew, for our idiom is constantly evolving; but spiritual needs of men are always basically the same. In response of these needs, the vitality of the Saint's message will live on with that freshness of a true classic, reflecting the spiritual genius of the Little Seneca (John of the Cross).[15]

Similarly, a new translation of the *Autobiography* of Little Flower (1873-1897), the world renowned *Story of a Soul*, newly published from London (1975) and republished all over the world several times, says in its introduction to the third edition:

> The growth of ICS (Institute of Carmelite Studies) publications – indeed, its very existence – is due in no small part to the book you now hold in your hands. When the Institute of Carmelite Studies first decided in 1973 to re-publish the Kavanaugh-Rodrigues translation of St. John of the Cross then out of print, no one could have guessed the outcome. The success of that initial volume, however, revealed an audience eager for more Carmelite spirituality…[16]

The publisher, then, continues to say that how the *Story of a Soul* had rapid sales *for 20 continuous years* and became their best seller, far outstripping all other releases, and now used throughout the English speaking world. I personally bought a copy from Manila, Philippines, on the occasion of a spirituality forum (seminar) at the Institute of Spirituality Asia, founded in 2000, of which I was a member of the International Academic Advisory Board from its very inception. When I asked the price of the book the lady in charge told me 100 Pesos (i.e., around Rs. 100 or $2). When I was going through it, she told me that there is 50% concession. To my question 'Why?', she said: "There was such a huge sale for every print; hence, the ICS publishers decided 50% concession for future sales." The point at issue is not this particular book. The interest in spiritual and mystical works has increased very much in the contemporary world. This shows an awakened interest in mysticism and spirituality in depth, than in the paraphernalia of external worship forms.

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[15] *Complete Works*, Foreword. Italics added.

[16] *The Story of a Soul*, Washington DC, 2002, ix.

## 4. Characteristics of a New Awakening in Spirituality and Mysticism

### 4.1. A Renewed Interest in Meditation and Silent Prayer

Meditation has become a new face of spirituality to our contemporary world. Meditation is nothing new to India or to the other parts of the world. But a revival of meditation culture is new. Several gurus with their own versions of meditation have come to the fore in recent days, some of them with large following. Thus, transcendental meditation of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Vipasana, Zen meditation and several types of awareness meditation (Buddhist in origin) became very popular all over the world.

Thousands of people from the West kept and they still keep coming to the East, especially to India, a country which has given many well renowned *gurus* to the world; many *gurus* also go to other countries to guide their devotees into a meditative culture. These people come to the East, visit their *gurus*, not for any academic degree or purely material advantage. Though I do not deny some tourist interest in many of them, there are equally many earnest seekers among them, desiring to go deeper into spirituality and refinement of inner consciousness. Obviously, this interest in spirituality, though not through the path and practices of traditional religious lifestyles, is a sign of the revival of religion in the contemporary world.

Since the world has become a huge globalized market, and everything in this world, including water, plants and birds in the air, are looked upon as commodities for sale, our attitude towards our mother earth became very sterile, devoid of affectionate love and full of greedy eyes looking for exploitation. This greed has destroyed the earth and its surroundings by massive structures of industrialization, polluting the earth, water and atmosphere. This is not the way Lord Buddha, who was awakened sitting under a tree which came to be known as the *bodhi-vrksha*, the tree of wisdom or awakening, looked at nature. Jesus Christ looks at the world and everything in it as the symbols of the divine and asks to move from the outer layers of our existence to the innermost layer within us, where we can find and experience the Holy Spirit or the inner Self, the one who is symbolized by all these things we watch in the outer layers of our body and its world. Thus, he said: "I am the vine and you are the branches; whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me" (Jn. 15:5). He also invited the attention of his disciples to the birds in the air and the wild flowers in the field to see how God protects them. Similarly, he said your father in heaven will take care of you (Mt. 6:25-30). You cannot move from the outer layers, where all are symbols, to the innermost layer of personal profound experience, without meditative thinking, cutting across the layers one by one, till you reach the innermost chamber where the Lord abides as the innermost agent (Atman: inner Self) of all your actions.[17] The new spirit of meditation is an antithesis of the globalization of the world into a market place of bitter bargaining, where everything is looked upon as lucrative commodity, and not as symbols of the divine.

### 4.2. The Sudden Emergence of a *Mantra*-Culture

Once I was invited to Germany to give a talk to the German theological association, on "perspectives for creating an Indian Christology." This was also a sign that how German theologians, most of them being professors in theological faculties in the German speaking parts of Europe, are interested in new theological perspectives coming from India. Making use of this occasion, I visited my friends in a Christian meditation centre in England; it was a movement started by John Main the Benedictine monk and is now continued by one of his first associates Lawrence Freeman. I was asked to celebrate Holy Mass the next day morning. They told me that after communion, all of us will remain in silence for 15 minutes, reciting the *mantra*: "*maran aata*" ("Our Lord comes") in our heart. "*Maran aata*" is the official *mantra* of this meditation movement, which has several centres in different cities, especially in the West. The word *mantra* is now being used all over the world. *Mantra* is a Sanskrit word derived from the first syllables of the two words: *mananam* (pondering) and *trananam* (salvation). These first syllables *man+tra* (*mantra*) together mean a word or versicle, the meditation of which will bring salvation to you. Therefore, those who want to practise meditation select or coin a *mantra* and use it for meditation, mainly to keep one's own attention steady on the point. The *mantra* can also be given by a *guru* to his disciple. The *gurus* of Transcendental Meditation founded by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi used to give a *mantra*, without any specific meaning. But the general Hindu tradition is to use a meaningful word, or a small prayer attached to one's own favourite God or goddess. In the *Philokhalia* tradition of the Desert

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[17] See *Taittiriya Upanishad*, III.1.1.2-3.6.1, where a journey to the interior depth is well described in detail through five layers of consciousness.

Fathers, the *mantra* suggested for meditation is: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" which was the prayer of the blind men whom Jesus had healed (Mt. 9:27). There are other Christian *mantras* used by saints, such as "My God my all," of St. Francis of Assisi, and the phrase "for the greater glory of God" (*ad majorem Dei Gloriam*), used by St. Ignatius. Use of *mantra* is a great help for concentration and silencing the mind to prepare it for contemplative prayer. St. Teresa of Avila also suggests the idea of a spontaneous *mantra* which comes from our heart during meditation; the same prayer is repeated as long as the practitioner of the meditation is happy with it.[18] For Christians the greatest *mantra* is the holy name of Jesus.

### 4.3. Greater Openness to Other Religions and Interest in Dialogue

The contemporary era of ours shows extreme tendencies of religious fundamentalism and religionless secularism. Both of them are extreme positions and, therefore, not ultimately acceptable. But they are only aberrations and do not mark the real trend of our time. We are now living in a time of mutual respect, understanding of other religions and inter-religious dialogue. This is another face of religious consciousness in the contemporary world.

Dialogue in Asia and Africa is now entering a new phase with the newly awakened awareness of ecclesiastical and political consciousness. This is certainly a welcome sign and may be the right time in divine providence for the blooming of Asian/African theologies in the universal Church. The western world's interest in the eastern religions is now especially manifest as millions of young people are turning to the East for a deeper religious experience. Freed from the spirit of colonial domination these seekers go in search of deeper experience, and though a legitimate margin be left for juvenile enthusiasm and superficiality, the movement as a whole marks a genuine interest in the spiritual wealth of eastern religions. Therefore, more and more *gurus* from the East are now welcome to the West and the flow of western seekers to the East continues. In this converging situation of many factors such as the emergence of political freedom and new self-awareness and the worldwide interest in eastern religions, dialogue has become a central theme both in the theological thinking and the practical life of the believers of the Asian Churches. Living among the believers of other faiths, Asia and Africa are really the right place for interfaith dialogue. It is interesting to note that the Vatican has set a special commission for dialogue with other faiths and the bishops' conferences in each country in Asia and Africa are in general promoting the movement of dialogue in the Church.[19]

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[18] St. Theresa of Avila, *Complete Works*, Vol. II: *The Way of Perfection*, Ch. 26.

In this light, we look at also the Centre for the Study of World Religions opened at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK) in 1971 and its official journal is *The Journal of Dharma* (1975) you are now holding in your hand. Western universities also have showed this openness to understand and appreciate the spiritual wealth of non-Christian religions opening new centres or faculties for the study of world religions. Thus, now we have The Centre for the Study of World Religions (CSWR) at Harvard University, established in Santa Barbara, USA in the year 1960 and the Department of Religious Studies in Lancaster University, England in 1960s. The students from this faculty of Lancaster University visit DVK every year for a course of one month duration acknowledged by the university as a credit course, which includes lectures as well as visiting various centres or monasteries of different religions. Along with these academic pursuits in centres of learning in India and abroad, we also see a surge in spiritual search and interest in prayer in our times. This makes the Indian ashrams a visiting place for people from other parts of the world.

## 5. Contemporary World in Search of the Inner Core of Religion

Real religion cannot be purely rational, much less too sentimental, but a matter of 'touching' God, experiencing God, in his unparalleled immensity, yet enticingly inviting proximity, which is transcendent and tangible, at the same time, the greatest of the great and yet the smallest of the small, just like a tiny glowing spot in your own heart. You cannot escape it; it is always beckoning, yet not imposing because it does not force; all powerful, yet waiting for your consent and response. Therefore, it is a free movement to which I give in, I am drawn to, and in course of time, into which I delve deep, abandoning everything else, as the sole satisfaction of my soul.

Yes, religion, at its inner core, is this astonishing, accompanying experience, which resets me top to bottom, changes my entire range of values and volitions in life and consequently my entire lifestyle. This is what happened in St. Paul, St. Francis of Assisi, and Mother Theresa of Calcutta. All of them were touched by God or God touched them.

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[19] V. F. Vineeth, "Identity and Universality in Religion: The Quest for Personal Identity in the Religious Tradition and Universal Mission of Jesus," *Third Millennium*, X (20007) 1, 43-62.

Real religion is a living movement, rather than a static structure with a stereotyped form of rituals, celebrations, and so on. Though all these are necessary for a joyful and communal expression of a living religion, one thing that has come out crystal clear is that the modern world wants to pray. After a march of rationalism, abstract idealism, and religionless atheism, people in the world loudly say that they want religion and that too a religion with a depth dimension, interiority, experience and a natural expression of the same. Thus, the present world witnesses the emergence of new prayer centres and the increasing number of people attending regular programmes of these centres shows that people want to pray. In certain countries, we witness an upward surge of charismatic style of praying, where people in thousands come regularly to take part in these prayers. Naturally, these centres have to engage large number of people and, therefore, the form of prayer will be adapted to their need as well. One reason of continued talks or prayers in these centres is the need of the common people present and it is well taken care of.

But there are people, both religious and lay, who want to pray in silence, look for a calm or serene atmosphere, to spend some days with God in silence, personal spiritual conferences, meditations, and so on. Today, especially in the West, I have found Benedictine Abbeys offering this service to those around them. I have visited a couple of Benedictine Abbeys in Europe and the USA, and was very much impressed by the silent atmosphere still reigning on their campuses, and the lay participants in the prayer programmes of the monks in the abbeys. People know very well the scheduled time of prayer in the abbey, i.e., the prayer of the hours, and I found a few cars, say 5 or 6 coming exactly just before that prayer time. Each car may have 2 or 3 persons at the most. This means only around 10 to 15 people. Certainly there are some others in the chapel. In these places we do not have large crowds as in the charismatic groups. But there takes place ongoing meditative prayer. The people gladly participate in these prayers led by the monks, all of whom are in their religious habits. They also distribute the text of the prayer to the people. The Benedictine recital of breviary is something like a meditative recital of versicles in certain rhythm and melody, like the devotional chanting of mantras or *bhajans*.

What Benedictines do in the world is done in India by the ashrams. India has an ancient tradition of ashram spirituality, where a culture of silence, serenity, meditation and occasional prayer programmes are maintained. This is very much true of the ancient Hindu ashrams. In the world famous novels, such as *Sakuntalam* and *Swapnavasavadatta*, we see how kings, princes and people of high secular ranks visited ashrams, and even stayed there a couple of days as a gesture of their love, esteem and appreciation of the ashram and reverence to the meditative monks in the ashrams. Those noble men and women of secular hierarchy thought that ashrams, though far away in the forests, are lasting assets of their kingdom, emanating peace waves which will eventually embrace all people. The ashram spirituality and the culture of meditation are now also very much alive in the Hindu India. Though not in the name of ashram, the interest and practice of meditation is well mentioned in other oriental countries such as, Sri Lanka, China, Japan and Singapore.

Recently, the all India Catholic ashrams had their biannual meet and seminar of 2009 in Vidyavanam Ashram where the author of this article lives and there were more than 65 participants from different Catholic ashrams all over India, a few of them were those who do not have their own ashrams, but members of other religious congregations, very much interested in the ashram movement in the church.

We also see great prayer movements very much appealing to the people taking shape and marching ahead in the West in our own time. To mention a few of them: the Taize movement, an international and interdenominational movement founded in France in 1940 by Roger Schutez, the then prior of a newly founded Protestant monastery. France also produced another centre of prayer, *The Beatitudes*, attracting several people from all over Europe and from other countries as well. Recently, a young nun, originally from India, came to Vidyavanam Ashram from France to get some training in Indian-Christian meditation. She told me that the communities in the centre called *The Beatitudes* request her to teach them meditation, mainly because she is a nun from India and also very fluent in French. People abroad think that the Indian priests and nuns know ways of meditation very well. Thousands of Hindus gather in the Catholic ashram in Kashi (Banaras) called *Matrdham* for prayer meetings on every Saturday and spend hours listening to the Word of God and praising the Lord in hymns and *bhajans*.

A few years ago, an American friend of mine took me to a Benedictine Abbey, Gethsemane by name, in the state of Kentucky in the USA. Seeing my interest in what is happening there, my friend who took me to the abbey asked for two rooms for both of us that I can have a better understanding of the life in the abbey. The answer was that there are many rooms (more than 100) for guests, but not a single one is free. This is a place of complete silence.

All these are happening in front of us, and we cannot deny that there is a renewed interest in the world for contemplative prayer. These prayer forms need not be called 'mysticism' as such. But the sign is clear that the world wants to pray in serenity and peace, which would lead them perhaps to a more silent and contemplative prayer. A sign of this is that the man who founded the *Taize* movement in France has already left this centre, not because he is not happy with it, but it is grown well enough and self-standing so much so that he felt that the time has come for him to retire to greater silence. (This is what I was told by recent visitors from France to the Vidyavanam Ashram).

## 6. The Alluring and Agonizing Aspects of Mystical Experience

What makes mysticism so alluring and agonizing at the same time? This is really a mystery to be known by experience. It seems to me that in the inner core of mysticism and contemplative prayer, three strange and almost impossible combinations takes place. They are 1) the fusion of time and transcendence, 2) the union of finite and the Infinite and 3) the combination of light and darkness. All these take place at the same time.

### 6.1. The Fusion of Time and Transcendence

Human life is temporal. We are born in time, live in time and die in time. The ever agonizing duration of temporality is the happy or unhappy lot of every human being. Time is a mode of duration, a process of becoming, moment by moment, an agony of realizing oneself through the continued chain of single moments. This is the unconditional mode of human existence; to be in time, to move in time, to realize oneself in time. This is relishable or enjoyable until the Divine, the Holy, the most Transcendent is awakened in the human person, placed on earth, where every bit of being moves moment by moment, dragging the body, senses and even mind to the haven of the awakened consciousness, felt and experienced in the inner depth or heart of the same person. This drop of the Divine, which is by nature consciousness, an innermost awareness of itself, named 'soul' or atman (the inner self), participates in the nature, vision and the very reality of God, because the soul is rooted in God's own image and likeness, which is pure, unbounded all-knowing consciousness. When the Divine is awakened in the inner depth of soul, the embodied soul feels the agony of separation from God, because it is in the body and body-bound mind, senses and the world. It is in time, the fragmented units of momentary duration and process of becoming and realizing are drawn to the mind, senses and finally to the all receiving and consuming earth. Therefore, the mystic says in her heart (hence the use of first person).

The earth, the mother earth, whom I loved very much and eagerly longed to identify myself with, is not my everlasting abode; I am 'called', may be also 'raised up' in spite of my heavily loaded tie up with this beautiful and lovely earth and what she offers. Now, I feel the stirrings of transcendence within me, beckoning me to rise up higher and higher to an unseen light, where time ceases to be and eternity begins. But this is only a call, at times a spark; but I am still left in this world of time. How can I hold both time and transcendence in one grip? I find it difficult. But my heart intensely longs for it. I am nowhere. I want to transcend time and temporality, and live in eternity where I am not yet in. Hence I cry: "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24).

Time brought before me the threat of death. The time of my earthly existence would be terminated. However, my present payer is "Come Lord, I long to be with you; because of your continuous call, my soul flies, but comes back to this mortal, agonizing body and mind. It is painful to combine time and eternity in a single moment; yet I long to do it, and cannot be without it; hence I cry, tears flow from my eyes and I remain here on this earth counting the days of your coming to replant me from time to eternity. I find it too difficult to combine time and eternity in a single fragmented moment of my existence, but my heart longs for it. Is this what people call 'mysticism', to be held in time, but ever remain beyond time, remembering your ravishing embrace with which you blessed me before?"

### 6.2. The Union of the Finite and the Infinite

Finitude is an all embracing reality which we experience every day and everywhere. Everything is finite. Limitation is weaved into the inner structure of any being I see, I touch, I use and depend on. But all these are not dependable at all. Not only they cease to exist tomorrow, as long as they are in time, but the very existence they possess is limited. The Infinite is not there. They all die and disintegrate, and return to the same earth from which they came. Therefore, the great philosopher Sankaracharya called all beings *maya*,[20] a combination of *sat* and *a-sat* (being and non-being). What is the meaning of possessing them? They all will disintegrate tomorrow. Be ready to leave them all. Then, what does come about? Instead of falling into despair, the mystic says: "My God is my all." In this vast world of innumerable finite bits of existence, none of which is ultimately reliable, the wise abandon everything and turn to the single source of all and say 'God alone suffices!' As the *Upanishad* says, "In the beginning all this was being only, one and non-dual" (*Sadeva agra asit, ekam eva advidiyam*).[21] Indeed, the mystic says: I will embrace that *sat*, which alone is real, which alone is really Real, which alone is the Immortal and Imperishable, which alone encompasses everything, and holds everything together in one single undivided existence. Let us call it 'God', the beginning, the middle and the end of our human existence, and it is by nature consciousness, or the Word which was in the beginning from whom everything came.

In the fullness of time, when the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ, He said: "No one can be a slave of two masters (i.e., of God who is the Infinite One and creatures which are finite), he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Mt. 6:24). The mystic, therefore, rightly chooses God and leaves all finite things behind and keeps himself or herself free to pursue the path of the Infinite.

The agony of the mystic is, though the soul freely gives up everything, it has to continue its existence in their midst, and even using and employing them every day. So, to have them as if not having them, since they all are finite, and to focus the attention totally on that One, who has now come down as the Beloved Lord, is the living tension that the soul undergoes. In course of time, this tension loses its strength; the soul slowly succeeds to combine both and begins and even enjoys seeing all finite beings as the symbols of that Infinite One. The creatures are now seen as the messengers of God whom her beloved has sent to her, sharing to them a measure of his own beauty and blessedness. The English word 'hate' does not mean literally hate, but does mean that no creature can obstruct me in my way to the Supreme Lord. The soul ever keeps itself free of all binding attachments to any of them. The soul very well remembers what

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[20] Sankaracharya, *Vedanta Sutra*, I.IV.3; see also V. F. Vineeth, *The Asian Vision of God*, Bangalore: Vidyavanam Publications, 2004, 131.

[21] *Chandogya Upanishad*, VI.II.I.

St. Theresa of Avila, the great mystic theologian of the Church has pointed out: contemplative prayer is possible only under two conditions, that is, perfect detachment from everything and utter humility in all what one does. This is because it is entirely a gift of God for which we can only prepare ourselves with detachments and humility.[22]

So, the soul sees a semblance of the loving face of her Beloved in all creatures, takes care of them lovingly, yet keeps herself always free for her Lord, who alone is her Beloved, the Immortal, the Imperishable One. Mysticism begins when the soul sees the Invisible in the visible, the Infinite in the finite and the Immortal in the mortal.

### 6.3. The Combination of Light and Darkness

The third fusion of two contrasts that the soul experiences is the fusion of light and darkness at the same time. There are different levels or layers in human understanding: at least three of them are clear, which can be compared to three eyes: the physical, the mental and the spiritual. The physical eyes with which we see material things in this world, the mental eye with which we grasp ideas which we slowly develop or distil from the data which our physical eyes bring to us, and the spiritual or the third eye, which is God's very consciousness abiding within us, and which Christians call the Holy Spirit. St. Ephrem, the great theologian from the East, calls it "the luminous eye." Each eye opens to us its own distinctive world of experience. The problem is that the food of the one eye is not the food of the other eye. The physical eye is never satisfied by seeing; but wants to see and relish more and more until it gets tired; but the mind wants to retire from the physical world and to think. Idea or understanding, which is light to the mind and intellect, is darkness to the senses and when the mind leaves the senses to process the data that the very senses have brought, the senses feel betrayed by the mind to whom senses bring everything. The thinking mind leaves the senses behind or takes a break from them, to process the sense data, and create ideas. For the thinking mind idea is a greater value than engaging the food of the senses all the time. The mind with the help of the soul, characterized by intellect and will, two essential ingredients of what we call consciousness, develops universal and eternal ideas which last beyond the fluctuating moments of time. Thus, the soul begins to get a taste of what is eternal and universal, which is the true nature of God in himself. But the real mystical experience is not at the mind level. *Mysticism begins when the mind is silenced* and God begins to communicate to the soul not through the medium of the mind but directly to the soul with a totally different, hitherto unknown language or light. This light is called a 'dark light', because this is not according to the logical thinking of the mind, but according to the divine light the Lord or the Holy Spirit abiding in the soul imparts to it. Since this light is far more transcending the light of reason with which mind, and together with it, or the intellect has worked so far, the new light touches the soul as darkness, because the mind and intellect are deprived of their usual food, and left all alone. Until it comes in tune with this new ray of light, touching it as 'darkness', because it exceeds her natural capacity of calculative understanding, the soul feels afraid to give up the former light of reason, for something not yet known fully well. This is the dark night about which St. John of the Cross speaks so beautifully and elaborately. He also calls this dark night the night of purification because in order to receive this new light, directly from God, the soul must be thoroughly purified from all its inordinate affections, attachments, however silly or simple they are. It actually works as 'night' to the soul, where the 'usual light', light of reason and argumentative thinking function no more. But, in the insurmountable depth of this darkness, the soul is not misguided; always she sees a little glittering ray of light, lit up from her own heart, where she believes that her Beloved Lord abides, guides her through the path of darkness. *The Dark Night of the Soul*, written by St. John of the Cross, is not just dark night, but also is the preamble of the coming dawn of light. Thus, the soul somehow manages to combine the agony of darkness with the sure hope of light buried in the depth of her own heart, which leads her on and on, under the loving care of her Beloved, who never abandons her, of which the soul is absolutely certain.

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[22] *Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila*, Vol. 1.

This dark night is the night of faith, which is a much superior light than that of reason, although not totally against reason, it transcends the human logic of reason in the light of faith. Ultimately, it is faith that matters in our spiritual journey. Dark night is the night of faith, but faith is an abundance of light which the soul understands, though the mind finds it difficult to accept it as it may not be in tune with its human logic. This should not make us feel that mind is bad. Mind is a faculty of truth. Mind is only a processor and as such is faithful to the data presented and processed. But the mind's logic is not always Gospel values. The soul, once awakened, surrenders itself totally to the Gospel values, the values of her Beloved Lord. Finally, it is faith that guides the soul. The initial dark light, the light of faith, eventually becomes the supreme light and reason slowly gets subordinated to faith. The soul loves reason very sincerely, appreciates its logical way of thinking, but also trains the mind according to the values of her Beloved Lord and establishes harmony in the soul, in the mind and also in the senses. Faith is not an isolated ray of superior light, but is inner awakening which is inevitably linked and united with the unfailing trust and unconditional loving surrendering to the Lord and operates as three in one, just like God also operates always as three in one.

## 7. Conclusion

As I mentioned earlier, the books of John of the cross and other similar works, such as the *Cloud of the Unknowing*, a work of an unknown author from the Middle Ages, the *Philokhalia*, *the Way of the Pilgrim*, and several other books of mystical lore, are some of the best sellers in the world today, of course, in the world of spiritual books. I do not compare them with secular novels. This is a sure sign that there is an awakening of mysticism and contemplative prayer in our contemporary world.

The revival of religion today certainly has a dimension of mysticism along with other types of charismatic or inter-religious approaches. In this bizarre world of religious revivalism - interspersed with religious fundamentalism and fanaticism, even to the extent of *Jihadi* type of terrorist acts – it is our duty to establish the true, serene, peace-emanating way; religions should mould us, guide us and provide ways and means to establish a humanity in unity of heart, because when God really touches our heart, whether it be through light or darkness, in the modes of time or transcendence, love and peace must be the net result. If the soul, in its journey to its own inner depth or to the height of divine transcendence, really touches God, love and peace should emanate from that person, because God is love, and His first and lasting gift is peace.

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# STATE OF RELIGION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

**Dominador Bombongan Jr.***

## 1. Introduction

Our globalized world is saddled with deepening poverty, environmental destruction and social disintegration. In the face of this multifaceted global crisis, has religion anything worthwhile to offer? Put differently, what constitutes an appropriate religious response to globalization? Samuel Huntington has already pointed out that our future will be characterized by a *clash of civilizations* which is stamped by religions, i.e., Islamic or Confucian-Asian civilizations versus the West. We may not however, agree with such a gloomy depiction of the future. The encounter among civilizations can be an opportunity for dialogue and cooperation.[1] By citing Huntington, we want to raise here the question of the perceived significance of religion for the future. Religion will play a crucial role in the future. This is contrary to the belief that religion has died out in the process of secularization. It is, in fact, a recalcitrant phenomenon which refuses to go away.[2] Religion has come back, in our globalized world,

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[1] Huntington, himself, in the last page of his book admits that cooperation among civilizations is a key issue of the future. The future of peace and the civilizations depend on understanding and cooperation among them. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World* Order, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, 321.

[2] In our globalized world, religion has three responses: fundamentalism, syncretism and ecumenism. A fundamentalist religious response can generally be seen in the reactionary moves of politicized religion to gain public influence and to reassert traditional values in the face of globalization. A syncretic response, meanwhile, implies drawing from, and reintegrating, different elements of diverse religious traditions which are made largely available by the globalization process. An ecumenical response draws on religion for an interfaith collaborative effort to combat the global crisis brought about by globalization. See Berma Klein Goldelwijk and Bas De Gaay Fortman, "Globalization and Civilizational Change," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 8 no. 1 (1998): 42-48.

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although perhaps not so much in its institutionalized version. This article will further reflect on the significance of religions in our globalized world by drawing on the works of two respected sociologists of religion namely, Roland Robertson and Peter Beyer. I will commence with a brief description of the multifaceted reality of the globalization process and the challenges it poses for religions, after which I will discuss the ideas of the two above mentioned authors.

## 2. Globalization

David Held identifies four-spatio-temporal elements in analyzing the globalization process: (1) the extensity of global networks; (2) the intensity of global interconnectedness; (3) the velocity of global flows; (4) and the impact propensity of global interconnectedness.[3] These four elements allow a more systematic assessment of globalization by providing "insights into the changing historical forms of globalization; sharper identification and comparison of the key attributes of, and the major disjunctures between, distinctive forms of globalization in different epochs."[4] Held holds that the enormous trans-regional interconnections that the globalization process creates lead to the *stretching of* social, political and economic activities across frontiers (extensiveness of networks of relations and connections). Consequently, events, decisions as well as activities in one region can no longer be contained or limited within its boundaries; rather their impact overflows to individuals and communities in distant regions of the globe. Such global interconnectedness rather than being the exception become the regular conduct of things in a globalized world. These "regularized" or patterned interactions generate a deepening and growing intensification of patterns of interactions and interconnectedness (the intensity of flows and levels of activity within these networks). As worldwide systems of transport and communication innovate and increase, the swiftness of global interactions and rapidity of transmission and movements of ideas, goods, information, capital and people accelerate too (the velocity or speed of interchanges). For that reason boundaries between the personal, local and the global become fluid and blurred. A global event can have a reverberating effect on local development while even the most local can have profound global consequences (the impact of these phenomena on particular communities). Held then defines globalization in the following way:

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[3] David Held, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, 15.

[4] Held, *Global Transformations*, 17.

> A process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions- assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact-generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power.[5]

Held's definition brings to light the multidimensional character of globalization that involves the careful interplay of the economic, political and the cultural dimensions of it. It might be instructive to examine briefly the different aspects of globalization and the changes, as well as, dangers and opportunities each aspect brings to religions.

### 2.1. Economic Globalization

Economically, globalization is the "process of growing and intensifying interaction of all levels of society in world trade, foreign investment and capital markets. It is abetted by technological advances in transport and communications, and by a rapid liberalization and deregulation of trade and capital flows, both nationally and internationally, leading to one global market."[6] Susan Strange, a political economist, identifies three major changes that have led to economic globalization:[7] 1 the accelerated internationalization of production measured by the rise of production and sales of goods and services by enterprises outside the nation-state, 2 the sharp increase in the mobility of capital as expressed in the preponderance of the international financial market (e.g., foreign exchange, bonds, shares, etc.), and 3 the importance of the mobile character of knowledge and information brought about by communication technologies. Some would see economic globalization as the eventual triumph of capitalism, leading to the inexorable advance of a singular global market patterned after the American (consumerist) free market.[8]

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[5] Held, *Global Transformations*, 16.

[6] Rob Van Drimmelen, *Faith in a Global Economy: A Primer for Christians*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998, 7-8.

[7] Susan Strange, "An International Political Economy Perspective," in John H. Dunning, ed., *Governments, Globalization and International Business*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 137.

[8] John Gray, *False Dawn*: *The Delusion of Global Capitalism*, London: Granta Books, 1999, 3. See also Leslie Sklair, *Sociology of the Global System*, London: Harvester Wheatshaft, 1991. He argues that the cultural-ideological project of global

## 2.2. Political Globalization

Politically, globalization implies a "reshaping of political practices and institutional structures in order to adjust and adapt to the growing deficiencies of nation-states vis-à-vis the forces of globalization."[9] The continuous flow of ideas across borders, the collaborative management of communications and defense systems among nation-states, the nation-state's membership into larger political/economic units (EU, ASEAN) and integration into international organizations (UN, WTO), as well as, the joint global response it has to globally shared social problems facing humanity, such as human rights issues, environmental advocacy, and diseases of global impact (e.g., influenza AH1N1, AIDS, etc.), have all resulted into a reorganization of the nation-state's functions. Hence, globalization has both expanded, as well as, limited the state's capacities "allowing it to continue to perform a range of functions which cannot be sustained any longer in isolation from global or regional relations and processes."[10]

## 2.3. Cultural Globalization

Culturally, globalization is evoked in expressions like Americanization, Western Imperialism, Coca-colonization or McDonalization.[11] However,

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capitalism is to persuade people to consume above their own perceived needs in order to perpetuate the accumulation of capital for private profit, in other words, to ensure that the global capitalist system goes on forever. In short, the ideology of the transnationalist capitalists is consumerism.

[9] Philip G. Cerny, "Paradoxes of the Competition State: The Dynamics of Political Globalization," *Government and Opposition* 32 no. 2 (Spring 1997): 253.

[10] David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, 208. On pages 91-92 of the same book, he asserts that the traditional functions and responsibilities of the state have been limited as well as, widened by the intense process of connectivity or globalization. As a consequence, for the state to continue to operate well in the context of globalization, it has to collaborate with different political actors on different levels (national, regional, global, etc.). The institutions, organizations and regimes that have been created to serve as "a basis for the orderly management of global affairs, that is global governance." Global governance does not refer to a supranational state with its monopoly of coercive and legislative power. Rather it is a new form of global politics "where the possibility of political cooperation and order" are deepened and enforced. Examples of these institutions are the EU, Greenpeace, IMF, etc.

[11] George Ritzer argues that our societies and hence our world are more and more following the principles applied by fast-food restaurants especially that of McDonalds. Principles such as efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control of

this is only one side of the story. The other side of the process is captured in terminologies like inculturation, hybridity, indigenization, creolization, etc. The latter terms indicate the need not only to take into account the global prevalence of Western goods, but also to focus on the consumers or the cultural agents as active participants in the process of cultural exchanges.[12] Put differently, cultural globalization is always about a global-local dialectic. Hence, it is not only an "out-there" phenomenon but also an "in-here" event, i.e., referring to specific locals, places and identities. Roland Robertson refers to this relationship as glocalization or the universal-particular connection. Where the particularization of universalism involves providing human concreteness to universal ideas while the universalization of particularism entails a celebration of particularity, uniqueness and otherness.[13] In Jonathan Friedman's view, the ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenization-constitute two trends of global reality.[14]

From our brief survey, one can already surmise the extent of dramatic transformations that the process of globalization has produced in our present world. Will a religious discourse find a fertile ground to grow in this new situation? Or as Peter Beyer would put it: "Can religion assert public influence in global society as societal system or only as a cultural resource for other systems?"[15] To this important question I now turn.

## 3. Roland Robertson: Place of Religion in a "Compressed" World

Roland Robertson's view on globalization is specifically cast in a *sociology of religion framework*, though not limited by it. His interest in religion lies in its being "a site of expression of issues." This view goes

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human beings through material technology are, in a sense, constituent parts of the "rationality" that drives the world towards the direction of greater conformity. George Ritzer, *McDonalization of Society*, Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge, 1993.

[12] See John Tomlinson, "Cultural Globalization and Cultural Imperialism," in Ali Mohammadi, ed., *International Communication and Globalization*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1997, 170-190, 180.

[13] Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London & New Delhi, Sage, 1992, 102.

[14] Jonathan Friedman, "Being in the World: Globalization and Localization," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 no. 2-3 (June 1990): 311.

[15] Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, London: Sage Publication, 1994, 74.

back to classical sociologists like Durkheim and Weber especially when they dealt with issues raised by modernity.[16] Robertson contends:

> ... my analyses of various topics and phenomena within the purview of the sociology of religion have almost invariably dealt with the relationships between religion and other aspects of human societies and between the study of religion and other interdisciplinary and subdisciplinary foci, as well as the underpinnings and ramifications of change in the sphere of religion. At the same time I have tended to treat religion comparatively and along lines raised in general debates among social theorists. Generally speaking, I have followed the implications of Durkheim's claim that religion has to do with 'the serious life.'[17]

Suffice it to say at this juncture that Robertson situates the study of religion (sociology of religion) within a wider perspective of relationships and not just treats it as an isolated phenomenon that deals with the purely spiritual aspects of social life. In short, religion is understood in its broadest sense. In Robertson's view the significance of religion lies in its ability to order a "serious" life.

### 3.1. Religion: A Critical Ingredient of Globalization

Robertson describes his globalization approach in the following way: "Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole."[18] Robertson's description of globalization is two-fold. Firstly, he speaks of the empirical reality of global interdependence and secondly, he refers to the felt realization (idea) that the world, indeed, is ordered into a single place. In a globalized condition, he accords a special place to religion as a "critical ingredient of globalization."

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[16] "Thus the two major leaders [Durkheim and Weber] ...in the emergence of a specialized study of religion were not interested in religion intrinsically. Rather their interest was a product of their diagnoses of the major trends of and predicaments of Western societies in a period when it was widely believed that an era was passing away and a new, 'modern' was beginning. Neither believed that religion in the traditional Western sense of revealed, supernaturally oriented faith and attendant ritual had a significant future in the West....unlike the vast majority....they did directly concern themselves with questions concerning, *inter re*, emergent forms of solidarity, ethics, morality, and meaning." Roland Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," [1-17]in Eileen Barker, James A. Beckford and Karel Dobbelaere, eds., *Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism: Essays in Honor of Bryan R. Wilson*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 7.

[17] Robertson, *Globalization*, 1-2.

[18] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 8.

As a form of discourse about "the serious life," religion, addresses the most existential questions that concern humanity (e.g. ultimate meaning, ultimate end). So, Robertson notes that the "idea of religion has been involved in interactions between societies – and accordingly has constituted an aspect of recent processes of globalization."[19] Robertson, hence, calls for recognition of the value of "religious" ideas. He maintains,

> Far from wanting to reduce religion to something else, I seek to dereify *the idea* of religion: to expose the way in which it has become a procedure for the ordering of life in the twentieth-century societies and the global human circumstance generally.[20]

Robertson demonstrates his point by dealing with the formation of modern societies. Apparently, in their formation, the idea of a "religion as a purely private preference" is seen as an ideal for a good society. Starting the 16th century in countries like France and the U.S.A., there was a wide diffusion of the idea of the relatively sequestered status of religion. This, claims Robertson, has effectively help in the rise of nation-states. The "rise of the nationally constituted society was accompanied in many places by the notion that religion was to be regarded as separate from the systemic domains of state and economy"[21] (Church and State Separation). There is, however, an irony that is present here. On the one hand, for a modern society to develop, it has to differentiate itself from the sacred sphere. On the other hand, to do that, it needs to "produce" the sacred sphere itself – as its own separate sphere – in order to show what it is leaving behind. As Robertson puts it "... the constraint on modern states to be essentially secular has been complemented by the globally diffused ideas concerning the category of religion."[22] Moreover, to accept the ideas espoused by the religious sphere constitutes a rejection of modernity itself. The ideas of freedom of religion, and the idea of religions' non-political involvement also played a similar role in the process of societal creation. Thus, Robertson argues: "While 'societalization' has been regarded as the primary enemy of religion ... I think, it can be shown more precisely that it is 'institutionalized societalism' which has actually installed religion as a global *category*."[23]

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[19] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 3.

[20] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 2.

[21] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 4.

[22] Roland Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, and Religion," in James Beckford and Thomas Luckman, eds., *Changing Face of Religion*, London & New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1989, 13.

In a quite different context, Robertson expounds on this idea using Japan as a case in point. Here, Robertson shows how the Japanese religion is implicated in Japan's selective involvement with the contemporary world. Robertson cites two features of Japanese religion in accounting for Japan's ability to accommodate modify and adjust to imported ideas for its own specific agenda. He maintains:

> I refer, first, to the particular nature of Japanese *syncretism* and, second, to the resilience of what I call the *infrastructure* of Japanese religion and the *infrastructural significance* of religion itself. I also invoked the significance of pollution/purification rituals throughout Japan's history, rituals which are central to the 'native,' Shinto tradition, marking the boundaries between the inside and the outside of numerous relationships and circumstances.[24]

Regarding the first, Robertson claims that religious syncretism has become really an ideology. Religious traditions have been used by governments to legitimize each other.[25] Furthermore, religious syncretism is evident in the daily lives of Japanese individuals. It is not uncommon for an average Shintoist to go for marriage in a catholic church, and asks for burial in a Buddhist temple. In other words, different religions cater to the different stages or facets of Japanese lives. The basic point is: *syncretism* is encouraged and part of it, is the tolerance to seek one's identity from different sources (native or foreign). Added to this, and this is the second feature of Japanese religion, is the basic infrastructure of Japanese religion which is highly polytheistic. The "institutionalized polytheism of Japanese religion greatly encourages the view that many different kinds of worldview can, indeed should, be coordinated, reconciled and functionalized."[26] On top of it all, one of the consequences of this polytheistic religious infrastructure concerns the rituals of purification and pollution. These rituals set off not only what is sacred from the profane but also what is inside from what is outside.

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[23] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 5.

[24] Robertson, *Globalization*, 93.

[25] Robertson's illustrates this process of interlegitimation: "A much more recent example is to be found in the way in which State Shinto was promoted during the Meije period largely in order to legitimize a basically *Confucian* code of ethics of loyalty, at the apex of which was the Emperor system." Robertson, *Globalization*, 94.

[26] Robertson, *Globalization*, 95.

Robertson argues that this is a religio-cultural basis that accounts for Japanese propensity for getting useful ideas from the outside and rejecting what is not useful or profitable for Japanese life.

Having recognized the salience of religious (cultural) ideas or discourses, Robertson advocates the need for a global-comparative genealogy of religion. He delineates this view in the following manner:

> Thus I should make it as clear as possible that the global comparative approach which I am advocating involves careful attention to the concreteness of the diffusion of categories and modes of discourse from one civilizational context to another, the relationship between diffused and indigenous patterns of thought, and, not least, the ways in which participation in the global – human circumstance involves, in varying degrees, acceptance of globally structured categories and styles of communication.[27]

If we have understood Robertson properly, the point he is driving at is this: we should learn to be more conscious of the power of religious categories or ideas to order or disorder reality, i.e., the material construction of reality. Such, for example, is the power of the ideas of the so – called "medieval Christian synthesis" – that gave mandate for the medieval Church's aggressiveness to claim the whole world into its embrace; or of the Protestant Ethics – that gave impetus to Protestants to get involved more in the world. It is all about religious discourse's ability "in the institutional ordering of national societies and international societies, as well as a form of discourse ... called 'the serious life'."[28]

### 3.2. The Religionization of Politics and the Politicization of Religion

Robertson focuses on the striking resurgence of religious and quasi-religious concerns in the contemporary world. Of particular interest for him is the "extensiveness of church-state and/or religion-politics tensions across the globe."[29] We will provide here a bird's eye view of Robertson's survey: In Latin American countries, the rise of theologies of liberation, on the one hand, and the continuing consolidation of church hierarchies in support of the status quo, on the other hand, are evident. There is also a mushrooming of fundamentalist movements (Protestant evangelicals and Pentecostals). In the Middle East, Islamic fundamentalism (e. g., Shiite) is on the rise. Similarly, in Israel, Jewish fundamentalism is also gaining ground. In Eastern Europe, like in the case of Poland, a growing tension between church and state relation, as well as, their conflation were evident, while in Western Europe, there are pockets of "religious revival." For example, the Green advocacy while not a religious movement in the conventional sense raises crucial existential questions which pose challenges to the modern secular state. In Asia, Islam in its fundamentalist forms (religio-politico) is also becoming visible on the scene. In the Philippines, liberation theology is visible. The status of the Catholic Patriotic Church of China *vis-a-vis* the Vatican is still uncertain. The Japanese State's relationship with the Papacy has been brought to discussion. In India, the Sikhs' situation in Punjab has brought into our attention questions regarding the dividing line between political and religious activities. Finally in Africa, aside from the dominance of Islamic religious activities in North Africa, there are considerable political activities among religious groups along liberational themes. Robertson also mention South Africa, when still in its' Apartheid era, where increased political reaction to racism is mounting.

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[27] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 13.

[28] Robertson, "Community, Society, Globality, and the Category of Religion," 15.

[29] Roland Robertson, "Church-State Relations and the World-System," in Thomas Robbins and Roland Robertson, eds., *Church-State Relations: Tensions and Transactions*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 1987, 39-51, 39. Robertson's investigation first appeared in 1987 but his survey is still reflective of what is going on in our present time.

Besides all these, Robertson indicates, a growing *global* orientation of religious movements. Nothing can best demonstrate this than the case of the late John Paul II and the Catholic Church's visibility on the world-wide political scene. Some examples may be cited here. One is John Paul II's bitter relationship with Latin American liberationalists leading to their 'condemnation' in 1986. Robertson cites the 1984 White House decision to resume full diplomatic ties with the Vatican boasting of the significance of the modern papacy. The South Korean Unification Church is another globally oriented mega (big globalizing) organization. Aside from this, a growing interest in the making of world-theologies is catching up.

### 3.3. Religion: A Crucial Factor in Shaping the Global Circumstance

All the above mentioned examples taken together, of the extensive worldwide religio-politico related activities, stand for what Robertson calls the processes of "politicization of religion [theology] and religionization [theologization] of politics or governments."[30] To make sense of all of these developments, Robertson, relates these events in the light of the process of globalization. In his view, we cannot in an *a priori* manner, think that religion has a significant place in the global field. Rather the approach has, first, to probe into the process of globalization and through it (globalization) one can come to realize that indeed, religion has a prominent place in it, i.e., "it enhances religiosity."[31] He argues:

> We propose that there are two features of the present global circumstance ... which accentuate or at least open-up religious or quasi-religious concerns. On the one hand, globalization involves a "release" from the "security" of *life-in-society*, thus raising problems concerning both the legitimacy of the *world order of societies* and *the meaning of what mankind* "really is." The first of this pair ... refers to the relativization-of-societies' dimension; while the second refers to the relativization-of-selve's dimension. On the other hand, we would expect there to be serious implications of the globalization process within societies. In other words, the process of globalization does not occur without strains or discontents occurring within societies; or if you will reaction – indeed – resistance – from *within* social contexts. As globalization proceeds, pressures are exerted on societies and individuals-in-societies to define the *identity* of particular societies.[32]

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[30] Roland Robertson, "Church-State Relations and the World-System," in Thomas Robbins and Roland Robertson, eds., *Church-State Relations: Tensions and Transactions*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 1987, 10. By politicization, "I have primarily in mind, first, an increase in concern on the part of ostensibly religious collectivities with governmental issues and, secondly, an inflation of interest among those with declared religious commitments in coordinating the latter with secular-ideological perspectives and programmes." By religionization, he refers to "first to the way in which modern state has become involved in 'deep' issues of human life [e.g., debates about abortion, sexuality, morality etc.,] ... second, to the Durkheimian theme concerning the ways in which the state-organized society has become, in varying degrees, an object of veneration and 'deep' identification." Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, and Religion," 11 and 14 respectively.

[31] Robertson and Chirico, Jo Ann "Humanity, Globalization Theory and Worldwide Religious Resurgence: a Theoretical Exploration," Sociological Analysis 46 no. 3 (1985), 219-242, 241.

[32] Robertson and Chirico, Jo Ann "Humanity, Globalization Theory and Worldwide Religious Resurgence," 238.

Put differently, religion or quasi religious activities constitute a response to the relativizing tendencies imposed by the compression of the world into a single place, relativizing tendencies which relate the four reference points in the global field.[33] When, for example, societies are faced with myriad possibilities of societal life on the global scene, there ensue problems of societal identity. "Given the historical significance of religion as the primal source of political legitimation (and delegitimation), it is not at all surprising that it plays a large part in the new circumstance and that, moreover, religious traditions themselves will be constrained to "place themselves and their heritage somehow."[34] Hence, they are fonts of interpretations about the global order (disorder), and sources of ways of defining it, as these reference points (selves, national states, humanity, international system) seek to declare their identities in the global field.[35] Moreover, as certain categories of being human or being a society become globalized or universalized, this triggers the process of searching for particular societal or individual identities. Expressed concisely, when one is faced with the global whole, the call is to seek one's niche in it, but by doing that you have to declare your particular identity. Here religion is a powerful source of "cultural" identity.

## 4. Peter Beyer: Religion and Globalization

Peter Beyer investigates on the relevance of religion in a globalized world. For him globalization is just an extension of the institutions of modernity. Global society, just like modern society, has for its central structural feature the functionally differentiated societal subsystems (e.g., polity, law, economy, science, religion, etc.) based on their particular functions. Each of these clusters is considered a form of social communication or action "on the basis of relatively autonomous functional instrumentalities."[36] Religion maybe considered as a mode of social communication which represents a subsystem in society. It is "a type of communication based on the immanent/transcendent polarity, which functions to lend meaning to the root indeterminability of all human communication, and which offers ways of overcoming or at least managing this indeterminability and its consequences."[37] This is a broad definition of religion which sees human reality and the world as sustained by God. The Transcendent God is not absent from his creation. And this world-immanence of the Transcendent God guarantees an ultimate pattern of communication in which earthly entities share only in an imperfect way. The function of religion, then, is to help people come to grips with all sorts of contingencies in life. This function it also fulfills in the modern world, although people are used now to look for private consolation.

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[33] "All in all, the globalization of the modern world constrains and encourages religious traditions and concrete religious movements to orient themselves to the fourfold contingency of the global human condition (consisting of societies, individuals, the system of societies and mankind) *and* to attend to that condition as a whole (even if that means trying to deny its salience or regarding only one, two, or three of those components as important)" Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, and Religion," 20.

[34] Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, and Religion," 19.

[35] Fundamentalism is one form of response to globalization. Robertson maintains: "In the absence of a coherent, symbolically meaningful expression of the world in its totality and of a *raison d'être* for the continuation of the human species (even though nascent international communism, earlier, in the century, attempted to provide something along those lines) one would indeed expect the proliferation of fundamentalist movements inside societies, seeking to mould the society along *their* lines relative to the world as a whole, as well as movements oriented more directly at the global circumstance per se ... " Robertson, "Church-State Relations and the World System," 47.

### 4.1. The Privatization of Religion?

Beyer, who relies on Niklas Luhmann's version of privatization and the place of religion in a secular world, claims that religion and morality have become more and more privatized in a globalized context. This is perhaps due to the fact that modern global society encourages "the rise of pluralistic and voluntary religion among individuals" which is precisely what privatization of religion means.[38] Part of this process of privatization in religion is the "relative decline in the public influence of the public representatives of the religious system, the professionals or leaders."[39] In the context of privatized religion and secularization process Beyer focuses on the significance of religion. He still believes that religion can have something to offer in a globalized era. He argues: "The thesis that I explore posits *that the globalization of society, while structurally*

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[36] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 75.

[37] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 6.

[38] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 71.

[39] Peter Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," *Theory Culture & Society* 7, no. 2-3 (June 1990), 373-395, 377. See also Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*.

*favouring privatization in religion, also provides fertile ground for the renewed public influence of religion*".[40]

### 4.2. Religion and its Renewed Public Significance

For religion to be relevant it has to have a renewed public influence.[41] To understand what he means by this, one has to distinguish between religious function and religious performance. The former refers to intra-ecclesial matters such as aspect of devotion and worship, e.g., seeking enlightenment or salvation of souls through rituals. The latter is geared towards extra-ecclesial concerns, that is, when religion answers or responds to questions or problems that are coming from other spheres of life,[42] especially when it sees these problems are not dealt in, in that sphere. He names economic poverty, political oppression, or familial estrangement as examples. "Through performance, religion establishes its importance for the 'profane' aspects of life; but in so doing, non-religious concerns impinge upon pure religiousness, expressing the fact that other societal concerns condition the autonomy of religious action."[43] It is in religious performance that religion gains its public influence. For a religion, however, to be a "publicly influential religion" what is required at a minimum is "that religious leaders have control over a service which is clearly indispensable in today's world, as do, for instance health professionals, political leaders, scientific or business experts.

### 4.3. The Liberal and Conservative Options for Religion

Globalization has now made it difficult for religion to be publicly influential. In pre-modern societies, religion's public influence was found in its close association with morality (moral codes) and group membership. This means that religion played a role in societal cohesion, that is, it set the limits and boundaries between social groups. In a sense, one's religious membership determines one's group affiliation. To illustrate this point Beyer writes:

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[40] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 373.

[41] "By public influence, I mean that one or more religions can become the source of collective obligation, such that deviation from specific religious norms will bring in its wake negative consequences for adherents and non-adherents alike; and collective action in the name of these norms becomes legitimate." Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 373.

[42] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society,"386: "To repeat, the Luhmannian view of performance sees it as the attempt by one system to address problems that are generated in other sub-systems but not solved there. As such, the problems addressed by religious performance are not religious problems at all, at least not directly. The solutions, therefore, while religiously inspired, will tend to take on the characteristics of the target systems: economic solutions to economic problems, political solutions to political problems, and so forth."

[43] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 379.

> In more complex older societies divided into stratified status groups, religious membership and social group membership were still, more often than not identical; but the dominant status groups, in an effort to bolster and express their control over a greater social diversity, usually attempted to style their religion as definitive for the society as a whole, often in the form of an overarching cosmology that made the norms and values of the upper strata, that is, their moral code, the presumptive standard for all behavior. Group membership and its defining norms were still intimately related to cosmic order; but now this association claimed to be relevant and binding for a far wider variety of actual life-worlds.[44]

The point here is that, when a particular group senses a rival or its identity being threatened, religion is "used" to demonize the other. The other is now represented as the embodiment of evil or "as the negation of the correct relationship between social order and the transcendent that one's own group represented."[45] As a result, "[i]n justifying the conflict, religion promoted the survival or expansion of the group and its culture."[46]

This role of religion has changed in a globalized world. Because of global communication, everybody seems to be connected. Beyer contends:

> The resultant globalizing tendencies of society have radically altered the conditions under which the moralizing solution is still possible *on the level of society as a whole*, because the group now includes everyone. The situation of religion in global society alters correspondingly. S/he who used to be the unequivocal outsider is now often literally my neighbor, whether I approve or not. The outside/inside distinction readily at hand for reinforcing the internal moral codes, and hence territorial societies becomes at least difficult

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[44] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 382.

[45] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society,"383.

[46] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 383.

> to maintain over the long run in a world of virtually instant global communication, itself a consequence of institutional specialization.[47]

It is in this context that Beyer discusses two possible ways in which religion can be publicly influential again. One is the liberal option and the other is the conservative option.

The liberal option stresses, openness, ecumenism, pluralism and tolerance of other views and other religions. In a globalized world, the public influence of religion consists in responding to global ills like political oppression, women and gay exploitation, etc. Liberation Theology is a typical example of the liberal option. Beyer maintains that:

> Liberation theologians are attempting to establish public influence for religion in the face of privatization. They are doing this through religious performances that concentrate on political involvement although they do not go so far as to advocate the legislation of religious norms. ... Yet, whether this strategy will lead to a re-establishment of the public influence of religious communication in general in our society is still an open question.[48]

Beyer seems to have reservations about this approach because rather than drawing from religious resources, it accommodates itself with elements of modern global society. Thus, religious distinctiveness seems to vanish in the process. Rather than avoiding privatization of religion, in fact, it promotes it because the approach appeals to the private decision-makings of individuals instead of putting forward a more definitive stance to be followed strictly by its adherents.

There is another option, which seems to be Beyer's preference, [49] and this is the conservative option for religion. This option has recourse to "the reassertion of the tradition in spite of modernity." It tries to place the moral values of religion, and be more determinative in the world by imposing its own logic on the political sphere. Its aim is to shape global reality. Therefore, contrary to the view that the conservative option runs against the globalization process, it is reflective of it. Globalization produces homogenizing tendencies as well as differentiating tendencies in the world.

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[47] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 384.

[48] Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 388.

[49] "... religion will have a comparatively difficult time in gaining public influence at the level of global society as a whole; but such influence will be easier to attain if religious leaders apply traditional religious modalities for the purpose of sub-societal, political mobilization *in response to the globalization of society*." Beyer, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," 374. In another work, he maintains that on the level of religious performance, a conservative option, in certain circumstances, provides a more direct influence to society because of its attachment to "socio-cultural particularisms that inform so many modern state." Furthermore, "What conservative movements sometimes succeed in doing is making religio-cultural themes the stuff of politics and law. As such they supply religion as a cultural resource for the political and legal systems." Beyer, *Religion and Globalization,* 94.

> The resistance to, or perhaps better, digestion of globalization in various parts of the contemporary world has given rise to movements informed by the conservative option: political mobilization as the service (performance) of the religious faith. Whether the complaint is 'Westoxication' in the Middle East or the difficulty of 'making America great again', the problem is similar.[50]

Whether it is the New Religious Right in the United States or the Islamic Middle East and the Sikh Punjab, these are "logical outcomes of a globalization which has generated and continues to generate fundamental conflicts among different regions of the world."[51] The traditional role of religion has resurfaced "making religion capable of communicating publicly essential information."[52] It is capable of doing this because religion has ties to communal group cultures. If political and economic responses fail to address the ills of globalization, religious leaders – who are closely grounded in traditional communally oriented culture – can galvanize its people in the of name religion (demonize the other; pure *vs* impure, the us *vs* them) to resist such threats from globalization. "Such a clear religious message can, under the correct conditions, lead to successful mobilization of entire populations."[53]

The aim of contemporary religious-political movement on both spectra is first of all to make religious norms and values collectively binding, that is they go beyond individual choices. Secondly, they want to make religion relevant for today – in that it offers something necessary for all something that the other spheres of life (political, economic) cannot provide. For the liberal option, it is by addressing socio-eco-cultural and political malaise brought about by globalization. For the conservative, it is by reasserting the tradition in the face of globalization. It wants its logic to determine the course of globalization.

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[50] Beyer, "Privatization and Public," 390.

[51] Beyer, "Privatization and Public," 391.

[52] Beyer, "Privatization and Public," 391.

[53] Beyer, "Privatization and Public," 391.

## 5. Conclusion

Our discussion has lead us to the conclusion that religion is an important ingredient of the globalization process both as a cultural resource (Robertson) and as a social system (Beyer). Rather than a mere reactive force, it is actually a constitutive part of it. Through our investigation of Robertson's theory of globalization, we learned that globalization is not only about big structures such as the capitalist world-economy, more importantly, it also involves our "imaginations," ideas or discourses on how to structure the world into a single place (globality). As we face the challenges of living in a globalized world, questions like, why are we here, what is the purpose life, how should we treat our neighbors – in short, questions of ultimate meaning – are once again gaining salience. Here then lies the function of religions as rich reservoir of alternative meanings, discourses and images on how to order or restructure our global village into a more humane way other than the one given by the globalization discourse. In a runaway global world, religion is a familiar ground, providing security, solace and stability for those adversely affected by the novel changes and the hostile forces of the globalization process. It can aid in the mobilization of group identities as well as bring people together to adapt to the changes of time. Peter Beyer is more emphatic than Robertson in saying that, as a social system religions have an indispensable role or competency that they alone can offer in the period of high modernity. What we need to do is to decipher this role and make its influence felt. Let religious moral values be more determinative in the socio-political sphere of life. Let religions reassert their own traditions vis-à-vis the global forces. Let religious distinctiveness generate collective obligation for people of this generation. For him, religions have an anti-systemic vocation whenever a "religious performance," is executed. In religious performance, religions draw from their own spiritual and cultural resources, thus providing a religious/ethical vision that is instrumental in resolving problems arising from the secular (economic or political) realm. What Robertson and Beyer have made us realize is that in an era where our future and destinies overlap, we can still draw on our different religious traditions to help us cultural groups to forge a better world and shield us from the unwelcome consequences of the global era, as well as, resist the "temptations" that it brings about.

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# PRIVATIZING ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE RE-EMERGENCE OF RELIGION

Gabrielle M. Wood ◆

> … Cochabamba, Bolivia. In this semidesert region, water is scarce and precious. In 1999, the World Bank recommended privatization of Cochabamba's municipal water supply company… through a concession to International Water, a subsidiary of Bechtel. On October 1999, the Drinking Water and Sanitation Law was passed, ending government subsidies and allowing privatization. In a city where the minimum wage is less than [US]$100 a month water bills reached [US]$20 a month, nearly the cost of feeding a family of five for two weeks…The government promised to reverse the price hike but never did…The citizens' demands, which drove a stake through the heart of corporate interests, were violently rejected…Protesters used slogans like "Water Is God's Gift and Not A Merchandise" and "Water Is Life." (Shiva 102)[1]

## 1. Introduction

While water is life for the living, true spiritual teachings mean eternal life to those seeking salvation. Spiritual teachings, which show the way to experience spiritual development and enlightenment, become a well from which the seeker can draw truth. Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."[2] Just as water should be available to all who thirst, the timeless spiritual teachings that illuminate religious truths should be available to all who seek. Buddha explained that: "When the *Tathagata* ["fully enlightened Buddha"] or the *Tathagata*'s disciples live in the world, it is done for the good of the many, for the happiness of the

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[1] Shiva Vandana, *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit*, Cambridge: Sound End Press, 2002, 102.

[2] John 4:13.

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many, out of compassion for the world-for the good, the welfare and the happiness of gods and men."[3]

Contrary to this view, many independent spiritual leaders who are rising to positions of religious authority are actually reserving their "spiritual teachings" for the select few. In many places, these leaders have played a large role in the re-emergence of religion and its presence in public life. Their teachings influence the way that people act, think, and feel, having a tremendous impact on societies. Religion is re-emerging in a variety of ways, but there is also this unquestioned shift in which modern spiritual leaders are actually reserving access to their teachings. In this paper, we will explore this shift and consider the implications it has on devotees and on our perceptions of the *spiritual.*

To preserve the sanctity of authentic spiritual teachings, we must consider the defining characteristics of these eternal truths. It is important to examine the nature of spiritual teachings from a theological perspective. This paper explores three characteristics of spiritual teachings: a) spiritual teachings are divinely inspired; b) spiritual teachings lead us to spiritual development, enlightenment, and ultimately salvation; and c) spiritual teachings are shared with humanity. In this paper, *spiritual teachings* include both religious teachings found in ancient texts and modern spiritual teachings. We will examine the tendency for some spiritual leaders to regulate the availability and use of their teachings, as well as the potential effects of privatizing enlightenment on devotees and on how we view the spiritual. Examples of modern leaders and their teachings are presented to illustrate the complexities of privatizing enlightenment. This paper concludes with a discussion on whether we should continue to call privatized teachings *spiritual.*

## 2. Spiritual Teachings: Divinely Inspired

When we consider traditional spiritual teachings, a common characteristic that emerges is that they were divinely inspired. The information found in the teachings, such as the Ten Commandments, came from a divine source. In the world's major religions, this source is typically God. For example, Jesus Christ gave teachings directly from God, "The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands."[4] Jesus explained that he did the will of his Father, which was to help *anyone* who believed to have eternal life. The Gospel of John is filled with examples showing that Jesus came on behalf of God, that his teachings were from God, that he had a responsibility to publicize the teachings, and that he would help anyone who was interested to attain salvation. Additionally, spiritual leaders have typically continued their own religious journeys, living according to the teachings they give, gaining an experiential understanding to share with humanity. The fact that spiritual teachings are *divinely* inspired means that individuals cannot create spiritual teachings on their own. A person can give great advice for living, gaining wealth and prosperity, and being happy, but a person cannot delineate the steps needed to reach salvation. This distinction is important now because so many people are stepping into the role of "spiritual leader" and advising others on spiritual matters. Have they had the experience and expertise needed to direct souls towards spiritual development, enlightenment, or salvation? Another implication of this characteristic is that spiritual teachings would be most useful when the information remains unaltered, in the words of the one who received them. When teachings are altered, some of the meaning could be lost. Distorting the teachings could weaken the authenticity, potentially causing tragic outcomes.

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[3] Agamas II.146.

[4] John 3:25.

## 3. Spiritual Teachings: Development, Enlightenment, and Salvation

All major religions appear to share a timeless, underlying spiritual message. Cultural differences and the time in which the religion, or sect, emerges create differences. Many scholars have analyzed the theological similarities of the world's religions. For this paper, let us consider the common goal of devotees to achieve *spiritual awakening*, which involves spiritual development, enlightenment, and ultimately salvation.

There are two major conceptualizations of spiritual awakening. One form occurs spontaneously or through spiritual practice. Termed "sudden awakening" by Buddhists, the person experiences sublime moments similar to the religious experiences described by William James as "sudden conversions." James cited the example of the conversion of Paul of Tarsus.[5] Experiences often involve becoming fully in the moment, a sense of unity, sudden insights, separation from materialism, and/or feeling connected to humanity.[6] Many recognize the value of sudden awakenings, but acknowledge that attaining the level of awakened one, Buddha, can require lifetimes of persistence to achieve.[7]

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[5] James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experiences: A Study in Human Nature*. New York: The Modern Library, 1902, 15.

Teachings of many religions speak about the path of spiritual awakening, which results in a permanent state with eternal and supernatural qualities. Zen Buddhists free themselves from attachments to materialism to achieve spiritual awakening. Christian Gnostics gain self-knowledge and use spiritual practices to transform into spiritual beings, and they view the events of Jesus' life as symbols to guide them in their spiritual journeys. Sufis dedicate their lives to internal and external moral action to achieve spiritual awakening. Similarly, Hindu sages and saints live according to Dharma to reach enlightenment and to become free from the wheel of Samsara.

While there are differences regarding the concept of spiritual awakening, most teachings have emphasized spiritual development, enlightenment, and ultimately salvation. Spiritual development involves a shift from acting out of self-interest (e.g., pride or material attachments) towards acting in selfless ways that are aligned with spiritual values. This process typically occurs through spiritual practices, rituals, prayers, and/or other active approaches. In some mystical traditions, this process allows individuals to transform into spiritual beings. As the devotees change inside, they tend to act altruistically and out of love for others. Spiritual teachings, such as the Ten Commandments, also describe behaviors that prevent spiritual development. *Enlightenment* involves gaining a deep understanding of life, death, and things of a cosmic and spiritual nature. The pursuit of enlightenment is often addressed in spiritual teachings, and devotees can learn about these truths through spiritual practices. An example of this is the Eightfold Path. Finally, *salvation* refers to absolute freedom associated with the afterlife. Major traditions emphasize each of these, as well as spiritual awakening.

Unless the way to spiritual awakening has changed, we should expect that modern spiritual teachings will encourage and direct devotees in these pursuits. We should also expect that spiritual teachings will *accurately* instruct devotees. Some aspects of the truth may not coincide with what people want to hear. Buddhists must live a life of detachment, Hindus a life of Dharma, and Christians a life free of sin. All of these involve sacrifice. Living a spiritual life may not appeal to everyone because of the sacrifices involved. However, spiritual teachings are divinely inspired, and they are intended to help humanity to achieve spiritual development, enlightenment, and salvation. Should we not expect spiritual teachings to reflect these goals, regardless of current trends or the desires of humanity?

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[6] Lange Rense, and Michael A. Thalbourne, "RESEARCH: The Rasch Scaling of Mystical Experiences: Construct Validity and Correlates of the Mystical Experience Scale (MES)." *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 17.2 (2007): 121-140. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*. EBSCO. Web. Sept. 2009.

[7] Heine Steven and Dale S. Wright. *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 31.

## 4. Spiritual Teachings: Shared with Humanity

The third major characteristic that spiritual teachings share is that they are given freely to everyone who is interested. Spiritual teachings traditionally appear to be given by the divine for all of humanity; they are not for the sake of one special person to attain their quest, nor are they reserved for the powerful, the wealthy, or the elite. These teachings are for each and every one of us. We can see this in the life and words of Jesus Christ.

Jesus placed no limits on who could hear his teachings. His message was not reserved for certain types of people, even though there were great divides among people.[8] He gave the teachings to everyone, shocking the Pharisees by teaching the tax collectors and the sinners.[9] He taught Jews and Samaritans alike.[10] Further, he told his disciples to teach anyone who would receive them, and to teach freely (as they had been taught).[11] He explained that anyone who believed in God and "lives by the truth" could reach salvation.[12] His deep compassion for humanity was clearly illustrated in his ministries.[13] This adherence to a universal approach is shared among world religions. For example, the teachings of the Torah were intended to be spread, "to every nation and to every tongue," not just to Jews.[14] Guiding texts of Chan Buddhism suggest that the path to spiritual awakening is for all of humanity and that it should not be reserved for the elite: "...When summoned by the monarch, they [monks] would not respond; when invited by the princes, they would not go."[15] The only exception that seems appropriate is regulating spiritual teachings based on the spiritual level of the receiver. Regarding physical or material criteria, one could argue that spiritual teachings should be directed towards everyone; they should be available to each and every one of us, regardless of race, gender, economic status, wealth, prestige, position, authority, or place in society.

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[8] John 3:21.

[9] Matthew 9: 9-12.

[10] John 4:1-26.

[11] Matthew 10:10.

[12] John 3:21.

[13] Matthew 9:35-36.

[14] Avodah Zarah 2b.

In summary, three major characteristics appear to define spiritual teachings: spiritual teachings are divinely inspired, rather than constructed by human reason; spiritual teachings guide people towards spiritual development, enlightenment, and ultimately salvation; and spiritual teachings are shared with all of humanity. Next, let us consider how spiritual teachings are treated, by some spiritual leaders, during the re-emergence of religion. The focus of this discussion will be on the privatization of enlightenment.

## 5. Privatizing Enlightenment

For this paper, privatization will be defined as taking public resources and regulating the availability or use of these resources. In the example at the beginning of this paper, the availability and use of public water became regulated by a private company. Privatizing is becoming increasingly common. One of the major issues with privatization is that some people lose access to resources because they are unable to pay the price that private companies charge. This leads to tragedy in third-world countries where scarce natural resources, such as water, become unattainable to many. Proponents say that it allows resources to be distributed more efficiently. However, this comes with great cost and risk. Only the elite are guaranteed resources and services. Despite the tragic impacts, it is now so common that it is applied to "spiritual teachings."

Before discussing the privatization of spiritual teachings, let us consider the scope of this section. Firstly, some scholars have used the term privatization to describe the weakened influence of religion as a political and social force. However, in this paper, I am using the term to describe a tendency of some spiritual leaders to regulate the access of "spiritual teachings." Secondly, in this paper, true spiritual teachings are viewed as a public resource for humanity. Thirdly, spiritual teachings are privatized in some ways that are beyond the control of the spiritual leader, such as when teachings are exploited by others who privatize them. Devotees may also be limited by physical or material issues that are beyond the control of the spiritual leader. In this paper, I will focus mainly on this tendency of some spiritual leaders to privatize the teachings that they received from a divine source. Finally, throughout this paper, comparisons are made between modern leaders and religious leaders of the past, such as Jesus and Buddha. This is to provide a perspective and not to imply that modern spiritual leaders are comparable to Jesus or Buddha in other ways.

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[15] Poceski, Mario. *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 133.

If we consider how extraordinary true spiritual teachings are, it is clear that these teachings are a resource that those seeking enlightenment desperately need. However, today spiritual leaders are regulating the availability and use of teachings. "Spiritual leaders" are creating boundaries around who can benefit from their teachings. These leaders only give the information to certain people; their teachings are not available to all of humanity. While Jesus and Buddha made great personal sacrifices to share their teachings with humanity, many modern leaders and gurus are creating boundaries around theirs. They determine that certain people can have access to spiritual development and enlightenment, while others cannot. This information, which the spiritual leader or guru says will help people to experience spiritual development and enlightenment, is kept from those in need who cannot meet the criteria. These leaders claim to have these spiritual teachings and that they know how humanity can achieve lasting peace, yet they reserve the teachings for certain people. I will give an example using two modern spiritual leaders, Mark Pritchard "Belzebuub" and Eckhart Tolle, to explore this issue. The two were chosen because one could argue that they have strikingly similar teachings, but that they differ with regard to privatization.

Firstly, let us consider the striking similarities between the teachings of these two modern leaders. Belzebuub is a British author who has published many courses in Christian Gnosticism, from 2001 onwards.[16] Eckhart Tolle is a German author who recently collaborated with popular talk-show host, Oprah Winfrey, to create similar courses as an independent spiritual teacher.[17] From 2004 onwards, one could argue that Tolle's work shares many theological foundations with the teachings of Belzebuub.[18] Both suggest that humanity is in a bad state (e.g., destroying our environment) because of drives, such as greed, referred to as ego(s). Both explain that the egos use our thoughts, emotions, and situations in life for strength, trapping our energy, but that this returns to the spiritual essence when we reduce the egos. Both suggest that to start separating from the influence of the egos, we must use awareness of the present moment. Further, both explain that when aware, we objectively recognize and understand the egos, and we objectively perceive life and respond intelligently to situations. Even more similarities include the notion that awareness activates the spiritual essence that allows us to feel peace and spiritual feelings. They suggest that we should always practice awareness, so that we live through this essence, not through the egos. Both say that being aware should be the focus of each day. Finally, both agree that the purpose of life is spiritual awakening.

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[16] Belzebuub. *Searching Within: A Nine Week Course*. 2001. Web. Nov 2004. http://www.mysticweb.org

Further examples of similarities are presented in a recent research study,[19] but now let us consider a major difference: based on the definition of privatizing presented in this paper, it could be argued that Belzebuub publicizes and Tolle privatizes enlightenment. Belzebuub gives lectures freely, provides hundreds of hours of audio and video teachings on his website, and tries to make his teachings accessible to all. Tolle gives some free access to his teachings, but he tends to charge money for his CDs, talks, and books, resulting in profit.[20] We will consider this example of Belzebuub and Tolle to see the possible implications of privatization with respect to the three characteristics of spiritual teachings outlined above: divinely inspired; teaches people how to achieve spiritual development, enlightenment, and salvation; and shared with humanity.

### 5.1. Divinely Inspired

The first characteristic, which suggests that spiritual teachings are divinely inspired, does not change depending on whether the person privatizes the teachings. It is difficult to determine whether true prophets or enlightened ones have or would privatize authentic spiritual teachings. It seems very unlikely considering that the person was selected by a divine source to deliver a spiritual message. Why would God choose to impart such teachings on someone who would sell them for profit or reserve the teachings for the few? While it seems unlikely, I will not consider this issue further within this paper because it is too difficult to assess. Likewise, I will not elaborate on the two exemplars with respect to this characteristic because I cannot give evidence to support it beyond my personal inclinations. The last two characteristics can be seen more directly in relation to publicized versus privatized teachings.

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[17] Tolle Eckhart. *A New Earth: Awaking to Your Life's Purpose, New York:* Penguin Publishing, 2005.

[18] Belzebuub. *The Journey to Enlightenment: A Nine Week Course*. 2002. Web. March 2005. http://www.mysticweb.org

[19] "Research" 2010.. Feb. 2010. https://sites.google.com/a/cnu.edu/gabrielle-wood/

[20] "Eckhart Store" Feb. 2010. http://www.eckharttolle.com/eckhartstore/home/

### 5.2. Spiritual Development, Enlightenment, and Salvation

The second characteristic of spiritual teachings is that they direct people towards spiritual awakening through spiritual development, enlightenment, and ultimately salvation. Theoretically, spiritual teachings are divinely inspired; therefore, we should expect that the teachings are most useful when preserved and undistorted. From there, devotees can use the teachings in a way that will allow spiritual development, such as applying the teachings in their lives.

Can we trust the "spiritual teachings" once they have been privatized? When leaders decide to privatize their teachings, in addition to guiding humanity, there is another motive: to appeal to a certain type of persons, such as celebrities, politicians, or wealthy individuals. There are aspects of all religious teachings that are unlikely to appeal, and the leader may be motivated to distort the teachings to increase the appeal. For a spiritual leader who is simply concerned with teaching humanity, this is not an issue. They are responsible for giving the information to humanity, clearly and undistorted, so that we can reach our full potential. It is unlikely that they would distort the teachings in any way. Contrarily, privatizing can potentially interfere with a spiritual leader's ability to give the teachings in their true form.

It seems that those who publicize their spiritual teachings are likely to give the teachings in a more balanced way, explaining the benefits as well as the sacrifices involved. For example, Belzebuub prepares devotees for difficulties that are unappealing: "True wisdom costs a great deal to achieve and requires intensive effort, because we have to go through the various situations of life that give rise to each particular ego in order to see and understand them and often those can be very painful situations…"[21] This is aligned with how the path to salvation is described in ancient Christian texts. Belzebuub also focuses on ensuring that followers are objective. For example, he explains the risks of simply believing his teachings, describes precisely how to gain direct experience of his teachings, and describes how to reduce biased perceptions.[22]

During the re-emergence of religion, many independent leaders present a teaching that is easier to accept. There has been an increase of "spiritual leaders" emphasizing positive, short-term rewards and de-emphasizing the negative aspects of religious strivings. Examples include an increased emphasis on using spirituality to attain wealth, happiness, and well-being, with little discussion on the repercussions of bad actions or the efforts needed to achieve a permanent spiritual awakening. It may be that this tendency is most prevalent in privatized approaches, and it has become more recognizable during the re-emergence of religion. Compared to traditional religious texts, one could argue that Tolle's teachings give an overly optimistic view of spiritual development and enlightenment, claiming that humanity is naturally evolving. It could be argued that he presents spiritual awakening in a way that is more closely aligned with the Buddhist notion of "sudden awakening," as opposed to the arduous path portrayed by Belzebuub and traditional religious texts.

A major conflict that privatization presents to maintaining the integrity of spiritual teachings is that it limits the type of people who can achieve spiritual development, enlightenment, and salvation. If we are in a crucial time, spiritually, then one could argue that privatizing spiritual teachings puts souls at risk because it limits the teachings to those who meet the physical or material criteria. In a section entitled "The Urgency of Transformation," Tolle explains that humanity has to work towards spiritual awakening now, or we will not survive. The terms "crisis" and "urgency" are used throughout the book, emphasizing the need to use the spiritual teachings quickly. [23] If this is true, then why privatize the information? If a divine source gives spiritual teachings to a person for the sake of humanity, then it seems that the teachings are of most use when publicized.

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[21] Belzebuub, *Searching Within: A Nine Week Course*, 2001. Week 3, 2. Web Nov 2004. http://www.mysticweb.org

[22] Belzebuub, *The Journey to Enlightenment: A Nine Week Course*, 2002. Web. March 2005. http://www.mysticweb.org

[23] Tolle Eckhart, *A New Earth: Awaking to Your Life's Purpose*, New York: Penguin Publishing, 2005, 20.

### 5.3. Shared with Humanity

This characteristic of spiritual teachings, which is illustrated throughout time in traditional religions, requires that a spiritual leader publicizes, rather than privatizes, the resources. Considering the ministries of spiritual leaders, such as Jesus and Buddha, it appears that spiritual leaders actively strive to bring their teachings to all of humanity. During their lives, despite limitations on travel and on mass communication, both appeared to have made great sacrifices to share their teachings. When spiritual leaders privatize, then one could argue that they prevent the teachings of a divine source, the water of eternal life, from reaching the people who seek it — those thirsty for enlightenment and salvation.[24] The only justification that seems appropriate is when spiritual teachings are regulated based on the spiritual level of the receiver. For example, Jesus gave his disciples special teachings probably because they had the capacity to understand.[25]

In the current example, there appear to be great similarities in the teachings, but it could be argued that one publicizes and the other privatizes. When publicizing his teachings, Belzebuub appears to reach out to as many people as possible. Examples of this include the following: breaking down barriers, such as geographic location (e.g., voluntarily doing international interviews and free public talks online) and helping people regardless of economic status (e.g., providing teachings freely and refraining from profiting). Belzebuub's website provides hundreds of hours of free video and audio recordings of his spiritual teachings. Free articles, forums, and live weekly question/answer sessions are provided. He does not charge for any other interviews or lectures. Also, he sacrificed greatly to provide his teachings in a written form: "The heat took its toll and I had two painful kidney stones, the fatigue that I had been suffering from now produced migraine headaches on an almost daily basis…I often wrote the weekly topics in a lot of pain feeling quite ill." [26] One could argue that, similar to traditional prophets and spiritual leaders, Belzebuub strongly adheres to this characteristic of spiritual teachings and to his responsibility to make the teachings available to all of humanity. His website states, "...spiritual teachings are a gift from the universe and should never be for profit. To charge money would be to require that those who get spiritual knowledge are those who can afford to pay money, but true wisdom comes freely from the truly spiritual. Its cost is in being prepared and fitting enough to receive it."[27]

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[24] John 4:13.

[25] Matthew 13: 10-17.

[26] Belzebuub, "A Summary of the Second Mountain," Web Sept. 2009. http://www.belzebuub.com/about-belzebuub/teachings/second-mountain-part-2?page=0,3

Tolle offers similar online access to his teachings: subscribers get monthly access to 60-90 minute streaming video, the opportunity to ask questions in a monthly talk, 10-20 minute short videos, and other perks, such as access to his partner Kim Eng's material. This is produced in partnership with "Sounds True" for the monthly rate of US$14.95. His "In-Depth Online Teaching Sessions," streaming audio and video sessions, are available from US$9.95 to US$14.95, with bundled options at a discount. Longer audio recordings are priced as high as US$59.95.[28] He provides a sample of free videos online. Past events have cost people US$145 to attend, although some scholarships may be available for some events. One could argue that Tolle's approach appears inconsistent with this characteristic of spiritual teachings.

## 6. Conclusion

Before concluding this discussion of whether privatized teachings can be considered spiritual, let us consider a few rationales for privatizing. Firstly, one could argue that spiritual leaders must privatize their teachings to earn a living. I cannot suggest specific ways that spiritual leaders should earn money. However, it seems that if spiritual leaders choose to earn money in a way that prevents access to their teachings based on physical or material criteria, then this puts boundaries around who can receive the teachings. This would not be aligned with the characteristics of spiritual teachings presented earlier.

Secondly, one could argue that spiritual leaders cannot publicize their teachings during the re-emergence of religion because of threats posed by technology. For example, the Internet allows spiritual leaders to make teachings widely and freely available, but it puts them at risk of exploitation. Belzebuub's course books "Searching Within"[29] [Second Edition, "The Peace of the Spirit Within"[30]] and "A Course in Astral Travel and Dreams"[31] were both available freely online for years. However, some people copied the material, and then they posted the material on other websites as part of their programs. Some actually removed his name and replaced it with their own. Could it be that others have even gone so far as to have published his spiritual teachings, in a modified form, as privatized information? In this example, the spiritual leader was able to protect his teachings by putting them into book form.[32] Rather than profiting from the book sales, he uses surplus money to produce more books and to reduce their costs. His teachings were copied and presented by other people as their own, yet he overcame this and other obstacles to publicize his spiritual teachings.

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[27] Belzebuub, "The Teachings are Free," Web Feb. 2010. http://www.belzebuub.com/

[28] *Eckhart Tolle TV*, Web Sept. 2009. http://www.eckharttolletv.com/ eckharttolle.com

Now, let us consider what it means to be entrusted with spiritual teachings, information that people need to achieve spiritual development, enlightenment, and salvation. Considering that the leaders of so many of the world's great religions have always emphasized the universal application of spiritual teachings, it is clear that spiritual teachings should not be reserved for a select few. Spiritual teachings are like water: they are entrusted to individuals with the responsibility to share them with humanity. Privatizing water puts a boundary between people and their physical survival. One could argue that privatizing enlightenment puts a boundary between humanity and spiritual awakening, and ultimately salvation. If an individual takes "spiritual teachings" and sells them for profit or only shares them with an elite few, this may be considered legal and ethical from a business perspective. However, in the theological world, can we continue to call it *spiritual*? These leaders say that the teachings are urgently needed, but some withhold the teachings from those who cannot meet the physical or material criteria. It seems inaccurate to call this spiritual, and one could even argue that it becomes secular.

The re-emergence of religion has had a great impact on societies, bringing people together and helping communities to address major issues.

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[29] Belzebuub, *Searching Within: A Nine Week Course*, 2001.

[30] Belzebuub, *The Peace of the Spirit Within: A Guide to Transform Yourself*, Emeryville: Absolute Publishing Press, 2006.

[31] Belzebuub, *A Course in Astral Travel and Dreams: A Nine Week Course*. 2001.

[32] Belzebuub. *Searching Within: A Nine Week Course in Gnostic Psychology*, Emeryville: Absolute Publishing Press, 2010.

People appear to be acting in very self-transcending ways and experiencing positive results from some modern religious approaches. It is through spiritual teachings that individuals often learn how to achieve these positive results. Throughout the world, people use teachings, both publicized and privatized, to guide their religious pursuits. Traditional spiritual teachings have always been valued when given undistorted, for all of humanity to pursue spiritual development, enlightenment, and salvation. Applying the term *spiritual* gives devotees the impression that the information comes from a divine source and that they can trust the information to guide them. If some privatized teachings are being distorted to appeal to certain individuals, this could have tragic effects on those who seek enlightenment. It seems vital that we take a closer look at what leads humanity during the re-emergence of religion.

If someone seeking spiritual awakening follows privatized teachings, to what extent will they be guided towards spiritual development, enlightenment, and ultimately salvation? We have to consider whether the re-emergence of religion will actually help humanity in its religious quest. To examine these issues, we can start by considering the water that we drink. Are we simply getting good advice, or will the teachings guide us towards spiritual awakening and salvation? In this urgent time when we need religion and spirituality the most, it is necessary to preserve the sanctity of spiritual teachings. Anyone who claims to hold spiritual truths is free to restrict their access in whatever ways they would like, just as every individual is free to choose which teachings to follow. However, privatizing brings costs and risks that are unaligned with the characteristics of spiritual teachings. Perhaps referring to them as privatized teachings or simply teachings is more accurate. Making these distinctions can help to protect the sanctity of the eternal message, in whatever form it takes in the re-emergence of religion.

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# WILLIAM JAMES, CHOE JE-U, AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

**Chae Young Kim** ◆

## 1. Introduction

Like other countries of East Asia, in Korea, one finds a modern interest in the study of religion although very little attention has traditionally been paid to questions which ask about religious experience, though accounts about such experiences are found in the writings of newly converted Christians and also in the founders of a number of Korean New Religions.

The most often discussed materials which directly deal with religious experience are the writings of Lee, Yong-do in Christianity, and Choe, Je-u (최제우, 崔濟愚, 1824-1864) in the most original Korean form of New Religion known as Chondogyo (天道敎). The latter case, in its subject matter, is commonly regarded as one of the most important instances of religious experience in Korea. However, until recently, most of the study which has been given to the religious experience of Choe, Je-u has focused on his struggle to overcome the political risks which he faced at a certain time in the history of Korea. Such studies were largely limited to some form of sociological or political analysis.[1] Not much attention was paid to his experience in terms of any psychological or spiritual dimensions except for several analyses in relation to C.G. Jung's analytical psychology.[2]

To develop a critical spiritual study of Choe Je-u's religious experience James's perspective and his language about religious experience could be most helpful. Thus, in this paper, I will sketch the

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[1] Western scholars have tended to engage in the same kind of interpretation. One of the first Western works on the thought of Choe Je-u focused more on social and political dimensions than on religious dimension. See Benjamin Weems, *Reform, Rebellion, and The Heavenly Way,* Tucson: The University of Arizona, 1964, 1-6.

[2] Several Korean Jungian depth psychologists have analyzed Choe Je-u's experience in relation to Jung's notion of a collective unconscious and religiosity as *numinosum.*

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understanding of these two thinkers with respect to how, in their key works, they both understood religious experience. Especially in terms of a comparison, I will look at James's psychological study of religious experience given in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and at how Choe Je-u speaks about his direct experiences in his *Donggeyong Daejeon.* By this means, I test James's understanding to see if it can be applied to the religious experience of Choe Je-u.

## 2. Experiential Dimension of Religion and its Study

Religion as a human reality, with multi-dimensional aspects, is best understood as an organism. Various components can be detected: liturgical, doctrinal, ethical, social, mythical, institutional, and experiential dimensions.[3] Though these various dimensions exist in religion, many scholars of religion try to specify or to determine a species of religious essence as this would relate to the experiential dimension of religion. For these scholars, the experiential aspect of religion is primary. It functions as an authentic source from which all other dimensions are derived. These subsequent dimensions all refer to secondary dimensions. For example, Buddha's experience of enlightenment and Paul's conversion experience ground the other dimensions which respectively exist in Buddhism and Christianity. The experiential dimension can be identified as a fundamental category which exists in every religion from which all other things flow.[4]

In the United States, concrete discussions about the centrality of religious experience gave rise to the study of the psychology of religion since the late 19th century.[5] Jonathan Edwards, in his book, *Religious Affection*, sees religious experience as an essential feature of religious life in connection with the religious revival movements of the day. His thought about religious experience can be seen as a stepping stone or forerunner for the later research which occurred about the role of experience within religion. A more developed discussion about the experiences of various religious and non-religious persons can be found in the works of William James. His discussion of religious experience was a unique event in the intellectual history of America. In the late 19th century and the earlier 20th century, in contrast to the present situation, it was very common for many European intellectuals to come to American universities to deliver papers (but not the reverse). However, after James's *Principles of Psychology* was published as the first complete book about psychological studies in English in 1890, his psychological studies were well received in the intellectual world of Europe. At that time, this book served as a source of pride for many American intellectuals, giving them an intellectual identity.

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[3] Ninian Smart, *World Views: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983, 7-9.

[4] Walter Capps, *Religious Studies: The Making of a Discipline*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, 1-2.

[5] Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, 18-9.

After the publication of *The Principles of Psychology*, the committee of the Gifford Lectures invited James as the first American intellectual to give lectures on religion in 1900. He prepared lectures about issues relating to religious experience and later published a book on the basis of these lectures titled: *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*. Since the publication of this book, it has become a classic in the study of religion and also in psychology and philosophy. The book's title has also contributed to promoting discussions about religious experience within academic circles that want to move toward a greater understanding of human experience. As a consequence of this book, the psychology of religion and the study of religious experience have undergone a unique development in America.[6] Among circles which have an abiding interest in understanding the nature of religious experience, James's concerns continue to be critically well received.

## 3. Phenomenological Features of Religious Experience

James's desire to understand all human experience is extended to his understanding of religion. He did not simply reject religious phenomena as a species or realm of data for understanding the experience of human beings. In fact, in the 19th and earlier 20th century, as a consequence of intense conflict between religion and science or religion and rational philosophy, religious experience as a species of human experience was not only not focused upon but it was also deliberately ignored. Against this trend, James's effort to understand human religious experience moved in an experiential direction. On the basis of human experience, he tried to establish his own unique perspective with respect to religious experience.

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[6] See the first chapter of David Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classical and Contemporary Views*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991 and Lynn Bridgers, *Contemporary Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005, 1-4.

James, among other comments about religion, very succinctly spoke about the religious interiority of the human subject as key in his working definition of religion:

> Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us *the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.*[7]

After his working definition of religion, James articulated the four phenomenological features of religious experience more concretely in the later chapters of the Gifford Lectures.

First, for James, unlike current critics, religious experience does not exist as a strange human abnormal neurological phenomenon. It exists as a normal human experience which occurs by way of a relationship with the divine whenever it can be identified in person's human life. Hence, it exists as more than a neurological event. The general perception of religion, in James's day, was quite different. It was extremely bipolarized between two interpretations. One offered a purely apologetic theological interpretation; the other, a materialistically neurological interpretation. James thought that both interpretations were not helpful in understanding the variety of religious experience. James, in his first lecture 'Religion and Neurology,' criticized not only the theological understanding of his day as a form of doctrinal conceptualism but also the popular neurological understanding of his time as a form of "medical materialism."[8]

Second, religious experience does not primarily occur through some kind of social setting but more frequently in an individual way, within a person's individual life in a context of solitude and withdrawal. Due to James's emphasis on the individual aspect, his understanding of religious experience has been frequently misunderstood as individualistic (ignoring social or communal dimensions). James, however, does not talk about a socially isolated human being but a socially embodied human being. His subject is not a static and disconnected human being but a dynamic and connected human being (someone who is connected with other beings in the world). This ongoing, dynamic connection with other beings exists as a basis for continuously having new experiences.

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[7] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, New York: The Modern Library, 1902, 32-33.

[8] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* 11.

For James, the consciousness present in an individual human being does not exist in a totally independent way; rather as part of a flow (a flow of consciousness that is connected with a previous consciousness and which anticipates a coming consciousness). It exists as a flow through dynamic combinations of past, present, and future. This notion is developed in James's first major work, *The Principles of Psychology*. Later, it is expanded on in his last philosophical analysis of religious experience as this is given in his *A Pluralistic Universe.*[9]

Third, religious experience does not exist as some kind of abstraction since one finds a deep dynamic feeling that is carried by religious experience. James referred to the qualities of this religious feeling in terms of "the solemn."[10] The solemn contains a mixture or a composite in a kind of feeling which consists of both fear and joy. These two qualities always dwell within a subject's interiority and through the expressions of this interiority as this exists by way of expansions and contractions. Feelings of fear function to effect 'moods of contraction' and feelings of joy, 'moods of expansion' of one's being.[11]

Fourth, religious experience does not exist as an enclosed subjective state. It is always pointing to some kind of transcendent reality which exists beyond anybody's subjective state. The intentionality of religious experience recalls how symbols function to communicate meaning. Most of the experience, as it occurs, points to an ultimate point of reference which moves a person toward an encounter with divine things. Hence, James' understanding of religious experience cannot be naively referred to as a species of psychological reductionism. To the contrary, the manner of his analysis recalls the methodology of a phenomenological approach in the study of divine reality.

James's four features of religious experience can be compared to the main features of Choe Je-u's religious experience.[12] His religious experience was described in the *Donggyeong Daejeon*.

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[9] James originally thought to plan such a project as a second volume of the Gifford Lectures. But, he could not fulfill this plan as a consequence of failing health.

[10] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 74.

[11] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 74.

[12] Choe Je-u's religious experience is frequently referred to in most Korean studies as the most important Korean experience in modern times. On the basis of his religious experience, Choe Je-u founded a New Religion, known as Donghak (동학, 東學, Eastern Learning) in 1860. It functioned as a kind of New Religious Movement

First, like James, Choe Je-u's experience of divine reality pointed to normal human experience. For him, it should not be seen as abnormal. Choe Je-u believed and trusted in the fact that the invisible reality (as God) communicates itself through ordinary human life experience. Most especially, by attending to the cosmos (studying it, meditating on it, and observing it), and through his own personal experience Choe Je-u came to know about how unseen reality functions in nature and human life. He wrote:

> The four seasons rotate without a change of order, and wind, dew, frost, and snow appear in a timely manner. Many people do not understand the reasons for it. Some people say that it is God's grace, and others say that it is work of nature. However, even though some people say that it is grace of God, it cannot be shown, and even though others say that it is the work of nature, it is difficult to prove. Thus, from the ancient times to the present time, people do not know exactly the real presence for it.[13]

Second, his dramatic religious experience gave him an interior conviction about the truth of unseen reality. After his experience, although he could not provide any proofs about something that no human eye could see, he did not hesitate to identify this reality as a normal concrete fact of human life. He could not doubt the reality of what he had come to experience given the living testimony that he could provide about this experience. The only question which existed for him was to ask if he could sincerely abide by the teaching of his experience.[14] He later identified the name of this unseen reality as Hanulim (한울림)[15] or *Sanje*.[16]

Third, Choe Je-u's religious experience is akin to James's description about how a person's human experience occurs in solitude. Choe Je-u did not have his religious experience amid comfortable or busy conditions as

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against Christianity which was referred to as Seohak (西學, Western Learning). It was not only perceived as a religious movement but it was also perceived, within academic circles, as largely a socio-political movement. In order to revive what was explicitly religious within this movement, in 1905, the followers of the movement renamed it as Chondogyo (천도교, 天道敎, as the Religion of the Heavenly Way).

[13] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon* (Great Scripture of Eastern Learning) translated by Yong Choon Kim and Suk San Yoon with Central Headquarters of Chondogyo, New York: University Press of America, 2007, 8.

[14] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong* Daejeon, 19

[15] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong* Daejeon,3.

[16] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong* Daejeon,5.

these existed in the circumstances of his personal life;[17] nor did it happen within a group meeting. He did not simply follow the dominant religious traditions but tried strongly to overcome them by himself in his own way.

The context of his experience was something which can only be understood if one attends to the unique circumstances of Choe Je-u's personal life. He was born to a widowed mother. His father had already lost his first wife and so Choe Je-u was born of the second wife who was herself soon widowed. However, according to the Yi dynasty as this was understood within Confucian ideology, while the children of a widower were to be accepted as legitimate in a yangban (양반, aristocratic) family, the children of a widow could not be so accepted. They were to be treated as illegitimate. They could not live as legitimate children and this cast a shadow in Choe Je-u's life. Through his experience of exclusion, he came to discover the demonic injustice of Korean society. Initially, to overcome these trials, he left home to seek "the Way" for almost ten years. But, he failed and returned home. Then, near his home, he found a quiet place and built a hut for meditation "in the nearby mountains and the river banks."[18] In 1855, he met a Buddhist monk and cultivated meditation more deeply and then, in 1860, after about 20 years of searching and looking, he had a pivotal religious experience which has become known as the Great Awakening of Realization.[19] After his religious experience he had more confidence in himself and so could begin to walk his own path. He would not simply walk in the way of a deteriorated form of Confucian collective life nor would he walk in the new way presented by Christian missionaries. He was not satisfied by either tradition and resisted them.

Thus, on the basis of his religious experience, Che Je-u proclaimed a new way of life that could transcend the two major religious traditions which were then current in Korea. He realized that Korea needed a new life (something which realized that all human beings are equal). In the Yi dynasty of Confucian ideology, Choe Je-u's experience and thought was very revolutionary in its implications: breaking through the stable socio-political hierarchical order of things which then existed in Korean society. Moreover, in his teaching, Choe Je-u used current Korean religious terms in his writings of testimony about his religious experience. Shamanistic,

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[17] Yong Choon Kim, *The Chondogyo Concept of Man: An Essence of Korean Thought*, Seoul: Pan Korea Book Cooperation, 1978, 3-4.

[18] Kim, *The Chondogyo Concept of Man*, 7.

[19] Kim, *The Chondogyo Concept of Man*,8.

Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, and even Christian terminologies can easily be found in his writings. The color of his experience was quite pluralistic. On the basis of this tendency, his experience-based new religion could be identified as the first Korean form of syncretistic religion.[20]

Fourth, Choe Je-u's experience also evidenced a fearful or mysterious feeling which is akin to James's understanding of what is meant by "the solemn." But, comparatively speaking, an equivalent expression for talking about the feeling of joy is not to be found in Choe Je-u's experience and in how he spoke about this experience. In his later teaching, he would advert to a sense that his experience gave him release from an experience of illness.[21] However, in his accounts, no word can be found which can be equated with aspects that relate to experiences of joyful feeling. This omission points to a key difference between James and Choe Je-u in their understanding of religious experience.[22]

Choe Je-u's narratives about his experience would, however, point to this difference. According to the Chondogyo tradition, Choe Je-u had his pivotal religious experience at eleven o'clock on the morning of April 5, 1860.[23] It was described in the first part of the *Dongggyeong Daejeon*. It was entitled 'Podeok-Mun, 布德文) and it is about propagating Truth. First of all, he begins by describing his physical condition and then his emotions. The feeling is almost identical to a feeling of fear.

> Unexpectedly, in April, my mind felt chilled and my body shook. I felt ill but did not know exactly what was wrong and I could not describe the condition of my feeling. Then, suddenly, a mysterious voice came to my ear, and I was frightened and woke up and asked "Who are you?"
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> The voice said: "Do not fear and do not be afraid. Humankind calls me *Sangje* (God); don't you recognize *Sangje*?"

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[20] James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, 234.

[21] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 5.

[22] I think that expressions pertaining to experiences of joy in religious experience within the context of Korea were added by Christians living and working in Korea. This matter should be more thoroughly looked into in terms of possible comparisons that could be made.

[23] Park In-ho, *Chondogyoso* (A Record of Chodogyo), Seoul: Chondogyo Central HQ, 1921, 5-9.

> I asked, "Why do you reveal yourself to me?" God said: "I have not been able to find anyone to teach the Truth. Thus I am sending you to the world to teach the Truth. Therefore, do not even doubt it."
> I asked God, "Shall I teach the Western truth?" God said, "No, I have a talisman (spiritual symbol) which is called mystical medicine. Its shape is like the Great Ultimate and its form is also like *gung gung*. Receive this talisman and cure humankind's illness. Receive also my incantation and teach people to honor me. Then, you too shall become immortal and the Truth shall spread to all the world."[24]

## 4. Matrix of Religious Experience

The study of religious experience developed in two distinct lines of inquiry. One pertains to the issue of whether religious experience should be viewed as a historical/cultural phenomenon or as a transcendental/ ahistorical phenomenon. Steven Katz emphasized the fact that all religious experience, including mystical experience, exists essentially as a historical and cultural phenomenon. He rejected any hint of a transcendental dimension in religious experience as this could exist (distinct from historical and social relationships which can be attended to from viewpoints that are grounded in analytic philosophy and studies of culture).[25] In contrast, Robert Foreman emphasized the fact that, though religious experience exists as a historical and cultural artifact, it should also be understood as something which transcends historical and social relations. On the basis of his long practice of meditation and the study of mystical literature, he came to realize that transcendental experiential moments are possible and that such an aspect should be emphasized in one's academic studies.[26] However, in contrast to Foreman's, Katz's opinion has become more widely accepted in current academic study as these kinds of study relate to the development of postmodernism and the role which is played by analytic philosophy.

The second issue which pertains to the locus of religious experience is not separated from the first issue discussed above. On the one hand, a chief question is whether religious experience is grounded in historical conditions or in transcendental conditions which work through historical and cultural conditions. However, if one wants to speak about transcendental conditions, a subsidiary question arises about concrete points of entry as these relate to transcendental experience. In other words, does transcendence emerge within the interiority of a human subject or does it emerge in an external way? Does an external transcendent source act apart from the subjectivity of a human subject or the psychology of a person's psyche? This is one of the main issues in a comparative study of religious experience within a context which attends to encounters between Eastern and Western religious traditions.

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[24] Choe Je-u, *Dongggyeong Daejeon*, p. 5.

[25] Steven Katz, 'Language, Epistemology and Mysticism' in Steven Katz, ed., *Mysticisms and Philosophical Analysis*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 65-6.

[26] Robert Foreman, 'Introduction: Mystical Consciousness, the Innate Capacity and the Perennial philosophy' in Fobert K. C. Forman, ed., *The Innate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology and Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 33-4.

Among Western thinkers, William James's works are still frequently referred to with respect to two key issues (regardless of what perspective might be taken). James, in his lecture on conversion, indicated that religious experience as conversion exists as a healing phenomenon. In conversion occurs the healing of a "self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, consequences of its firmer hold upon religious entities."[27] In proceeding to describe religious experience, James accepted current psychical research materials and he also directly came to know about the experience of Mrs. Pieper, a medium, through a séance that James participated in with her.[28] As part of his own spiritual journey, James became involved in the development of psychical research and he later helped to found the American Society for Psychical Research.[29]

James received many creative insights through his research about the scope and depth of psychical research. He especially accepted what two key figures had to say about the deeper regions of the human psyche. Frederic Myers spoke about a region which exists beyond consciousness: a region which he called the subliminal or the subconscious.[30] Richard Buck, a Canadian depth psychologist, spoke about a cosmic consciousness which exists beyond the field of consciousness. Apart from these two men and the ideas that they proposed, James noted a number of other ideas which were compatible with what was known about religious experience within many religious traditions.

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[27] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 187.

[28] William James, *Essays in Psychical Research*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986, 15-9.

[29] Linda Simon, *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998, xviii.

[30] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 228.

On the basis of these works James argued that religious experience is not derived from consciousness but from an inner, deeper dimension that is present in the human psyche. This subconscious region exists as the source of religious experience:

> ... we cannot, I think, avoid the conclusion that in religion we have a department of human nature with unusually close relations to the transmarginal or subliminal region. ... It is also the fountain-head of much that feeds our religion. In personal deep in the religious life, as we have now abundantly seen, - and this is my conclusion, - the door into this region seems unusually wide open; at any rate, experiences making their entrance through that door have emphatic influence in shaping religious history.[31]

James's understanding about the matrix of religious experience and its features can be applied to the religious experience of Choe Je-u. According to Choe Je-u, in the universe, the human being exists as the most spiritual kind of being that constantly searches for "the Truth" in human life.[32] However, human beings cannot fulfill themselves in their spiritual journey unless they have a new religious experience. To him religious experience exists as a kind of breakthrough. It comes as a great event to herald the proclamation of a new age.[33]

Because of the radicalism of religious experience, Choe Je-u noted that his religious experience, as the source of his teaching, was something that could not be derived from current religious traditions nor from some kind of religious consciousness since it must come from something within his own internal mind which transcended what had existed before in terms of a previously existing or a previously acquired form of religious sensitivity. In this context, he emphasized that his experience came to him suddenly, beyond his will and thought.[34] Things happened through the hearing of a "mysterious voice"[35] and feeling "the vital force of contact with the Spirit."[36]

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[31] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 473.

[32] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 7.

[33] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 6.

[34] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 4-5, 8.

[35] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 4.

[36] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 8.

In coming to realize that his experience came to him through an interior, deep region of his psyche, he was able to equate this region with the depth of his mind. It could be related to James's reference to the *subliminal* or *the unconscious.* For Choe Je-u, subliminal religion does not exist simply as a place for religious experience since it also exists as a source of everything in the universe. It exists not as a means that is needed for the experience but as an end or a matrix. According to Choe Je-u, this subliminal region exists as the inner, deep mind of the human subject. In this sense, the deep interior region present in a human subject does not exist as a mediating locus of religious experience. It exists rather as the Spirit or God that a human subject experiences and which Choe Je-u also experienced.

> The divine answer was, "My mind is your mind. How can Humankind know it? People know of Heaven and earth, but they do not know the Spirit. I am the Spirit. As I am giving you the eternal Truth, cultivate and refine it, write it down and teach it to the people. Establish the laws of practice and propagate the Truth (virtue). Then you will have eternal life and will brighten the world."[37]

After this sudden, transitory, and passive experience, Choe Je-u did not initially know how to express his experience. He could not find a proper language to describe his experience in any language that he was familiar with. For almost a year, Choe Je-u practiced the teachings of his experience by himself and he meditated on them to cultivate his experience and also in order to discover how to communicate his teachings to the general public, to encourage them to follow the Way.[38]

In the *Buryeon* Giyeon (불연기연, 不然基然, Not so, Yet so) of *Donggyeong Daejeon*, he apparently expressed the notion that the Divine or God does not exist as an abstract doctrine but as "a source of all lives and all things."[39] He noted that ultimate reality cannot be experienced simply by studying the current religious texts of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and the New Western Religion of Christianity. Instead, for him, the most important thing to have and to experience is to have faith and an attitude of sincerity towards God as this can only be known through the practical way of *Chodoggyeo* (the Eastern Learning).[40] To create this kind of disposition in believers, he made a simple *Jumun* (주문, 呪文, an incantation) as a technique for his followers to repeat so that they would have the same experience as he had had. The apex of his argument with respect to this technique is his teaching that God does not exist externally as "the transcendental being" but as "the inner transcendental" or, in other words, as "God within me."[41]

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[37] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 9.

[38] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 9.

[39] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 23.

[40] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 23.

Given this emphasis on the nature of this immanent transcendent reality, critical discussions ensued about what kind of relation can exist between a human being and God. Is God a different kind of being or is his being identical with the kind of human being that a human being is? In response, Choe Je-u taught that an identity or unity exists between a human being and God. This is a central doctrine of his New Religion and, in the way that Choe Je-u named this unity or identity, he referred to it as *In Nae Ch'on* (인내천, 人乃天, Man is God).[42]

For both James and Choe Je-u the experience as such cannot be precisely identified in terms of some kind of positive or negative nature. Rather they both thought that subliminal religious experience should be seen as something neutral. Depending upon interior psychic or spiritual conditions and circumstances, this religious experience manifests different features. Sometimes it comes in an extreme, intense form and sometimes, in an opposite, contrary way (with ordinary, simple features). Such variation can be found not only in the so-called institutionalized World Religions and in New Religions but also in non-religious places or at secular meetings. Every place is open to religious experience: sometimes through conditions that operate positively and negatively. In addition, the experience means different things at times for the same subject. For instance, an original experience is both good and beautiful although, later, the experience transforms itself into something which has many destructive consequences. Thus, as James put it in the book title of his Gifford Lectures, one key feature present in religious experience as a phenomenon is the varieties of experience which are present in it.

James, in the latter part of his lecture on mysticism, described the fact that mystical experience can function constructively as one's main source for living a fully human life although this experience can also function in a destructive fashion. Positive experience can give human life a deeply optimistic form of consolation although it can also produce something which is entirely opposite in terms of pessimistic anxiety. James identified negative mystical experience as "*diabolical* mysticism."[43] He thought that these experiences could not be separated; they all derive from the same source (a subliminal region in the human psyche).

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[41] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 26.

[42] Yi Ton-hwa, *In Nae Ch'on Youi* (The Essential Meaning of 'Man is God'), Seoul: Ch'ondogyo Central HQ, 1968, 24.

> It is evident that from the point of view of their psychological mechanism, the classical mysticism and these lower mysticisms spring from the same mental level, from that great subliminal or transmarginal region of which science is beginning to admit the existence, but of which so little is really known. That region contains every kind of matter: "seraph and snake" abide there side by side. To come from thence is no infallible credential. What comes must be sifted and tested, and run the gauntlet of confrontation with the total context of experience, just like what comes from the outer world of sense.[44]

Choe Je-u also described his religious experience in a similar way. He also recognized that the experience may not exist as a comforting, optimistic experience. He knew that inner depth human experience could occur destructively in human life. He concretely expressed his opinion when his disciples asked him about how the human mind as God's mind is able to produce wrongdoings in human history. He spoke about a reason which he gives in connection with the presence of vital force or energy.

> The disciple asked, "If the mind of God is identical with the mind of humans, why is there good and evil?" I answered: "God ordains the standard of high and low qualities of life, and God determines the principle of joy and sorrow. The virtues of the superman consist of right energy (vital force) and a stable mind and, therefore, his virtue is one with the virtue of the universe. However, the inferior man has wrong energy and an unstable mind and therefore violates the will of God. Isn't this the principle of success (good) and failure (evil)?"[45]

Here, James and Choe Je-u both emphasized the fact that subliminal experience itself cannot be easily identified as either good or evil. However, the fruits of the experience should indicate the presence of either good or evil. In this sense, James argued that mystical experience by itself does not exist as an "infallible credential."[46] It should be tested to see if a given experience is truly authentic or not in terms of how it relates to the living of one's practical life. Theoretical or doctrinal criteria should not be used to evaluate any claims about religious experience unless one sufficiently attends to how any alleged experiences can be properly tested within the context of one's concrete human life. In speaking about saintliness, James spoke about the place of right judgment, moving toward a philosophy of pragmatism which emerged later on in the development of his thought. As James argues:

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[43] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 417.

[44] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 417-418.

[45] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 11.

[46] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 417.

> We have merely to collect things together without any special *a priori* theological system, and out of an aggregate of piecemeal judgments as to the value of this and that experience – judgments in which our general philosophic prejudices, our instincts, and our common sense are our only guides – decide that *on the whole* one type of religion is approved by its fruits, and another type condemned.[47]

Choe Je-u also realized that experience cannot be simply viewed as the right source that one should follow in one's human life since it must always be assisted through a ceaseless form of training that seeks to test the good or the value of one's life. The process does not operate in a simply cognitive manner since all of one's being is involved in an assemblage of many variables which, together, are constitutive of a person's personality and character.

Thus, after his religious experience, Choe Je-u pondered about the simple but the most effective way for recognizing and developing a uniquely distinct form of training as *Jumun* which markedly differed from what one could find in the established religious traditions which already existed. In developing this, he attempted to create new terminologies, new incantations, and new poems for his followers to utilize in practicing the Way concretely in their lives. He developed an outline of spiritual training[48] as this existed in relation to his earlier religious experience. Although his experience would criticize Christianity, in actual fact, his training program resembled mission programs as these existed then and were practiced among the Protestant missionaries who labored in Korea.[49]

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[47] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 19.

[48] Choe Je-u, *Donggyeong Daejeon*, 18.

[49] James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, 239.

## 5. Conclusion

In my paper, I have tried to indicate a number of applicable comparative points for judging how William James spoke about religious experience in his Gifford Lectures and how Choe Je-u spoke about his religious experience in *Donggyeong Daejeon.* I have especially concentrated on two aspects present in religious experience.

First, I have tried to show how religious experience can be understood in terms of how it relates to a number of phenomenological variables. Their understanding is almost identical except for the joyful component which James identifies as a key constituent of religious experience in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. While, on the one hand, this variable needs to be further examined within the context of Korean classical literature, until now, in Choe Je-u's work, I have not been able to find an equivalent word for James's "the joyful."

Second, I have described the matrix of religious experience. James and Choe, Je-u both located God within the human subject. James was very aware of two current dangers, medical materialism and psychologism which threatened how religious experience should be properly interpreted. To counter these dangers, James emphasized the implications of speaking about "the subliminal" as the matrix of religious experience. In conjunction with this kind of analysis, James avoided engaging in any efforts to identify the locus as God.

Similarly, for Choe Je-u, religious experience points to an inner depth dimension, but his "subliminal region" as his followers interpreted later, is not to be interpreted as referring only to a locus where religious experience resides since it is also to be identified as God or the Divine Being. This stands as another key difference which distinguishes how James and Choe Je-u understood religious experience.

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# BELIEF ACROSS BORDERS
## Religion as Networked Social Capital

**Maheshvari Naidu***

### 1. Introduction

This paper uses data gathered through interviews with Indian transnational migrant workers in the greater Durban[1] area in the province of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa and uses the analytical lens of social capital to contextualize their religious practices in a transnational space. The paper argues that, within the context of the transnational lives of the migrant workers, religion, and religious ritual and activities, can perhaps be understood as (re)emerging in the form of social capital that helps build cohesive bonds and ties amongst the migrants.

In the case of diasporic and itinerant migrancy, studies unveil[2] that people with transnationalised lives tend to simultaneously inhabit what can be construed of as multiple spaces that reveal their simultaneous experiences of heightened connectivity and heightened dislocation. Writers like Gardner and Grillo[3] and Levitt[4] point out however, that despite a

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[1] Indians in South Africa are descendants of the large numbers of Indians who accepted the British passage to South Africa in the 19th century to work the sugar cane plantations in the coastal province of now KwaZulu Natal. A small number are the descendants from Indian (predominantly Gujarati) traders who migrated to South Africa, following the initial indentured workers. South Africa has the largest population of people of Indian descent outside of India, who are born in South Africa, with Durban home to the largest concentration of Indians in the country.

[2] See P. Levitt, "Redefining the Boundaries of Belonging: The Institutional Character of Transnational Religious Life" in *Sociology of Religion* 65, 1 (2004), 1-18; C. Peach, "South Asian migration and settlement in Great Britain, 1951-2001" in *Contemporary South Asia* 15, 2 (2006), 133-146; K. Leonard, "Transnationalism, Diaspora, Translation: Comparing Punjabis and Hyderabadis Abroad" in *Sikh Formations* 3, 1 (2007), 51-66; S. Vertovec, *Transnationalism*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

[3] K. Gardner and R. Grillo, "Transnational households and Ritual: An Overview" in *Global Networks* 2, 3 (2002), 179-190.

[4] P. Levitt, "You Know, Abraham Was Really the First Immigrant: Religion and Transnational Migration" in *International Migration Review* 37, 3 (2003), 847; P.

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broad spectrum of research on transnational migration and diasporas, many aspects of the personal social lives that draw the curtain on the contexts of connectivity and dislocation of transnationals have been accorded less consideration than they deserve; religion, and the religious lives of transnational migrants being one of them. The proverbial bottom line is that the transnational practices of migrants, other than issues of remittances and reciprocal help to the sending homeland, and aspects of their involvement in economic and or political activities, remain under-scrutinized in the literature.[5]

The term *transnational* can perhaps be better explained as involving flows that are exchanged through networks of institutions, ideas, and as in this study, through the networks of individuals. The working migrants in this study are seen as spanning two geographic and cultural spaces in their porous movement back and forth between the 'sending society' or homeland (Pakistan, Bangladesh, India), and places of employment in the 'receiving' suburbs of Durban, South Africa. The paper seeks to show that the migrants cope with the sense of heightened dislocation from the families and familiar socio-cultural spaces back in the sending society, by constructing or seamlessly entering networks of friends and acquaintances with other migrant workers from India and Pakistan or Bangladesh. These networks help build cohesive ties of heightened connectivity. The paper argues that religion, worship, participation and sharing in religious activities and festivals with other migrants in the receiving homeland, is to be construed as a form of social capital that the migrant workers tap into, to connect with one another.

## 2. Background to Study

The paper makes use of participant observation and interviews that attempt to capture aspects of the participants lived experiences through conversations, interviews and time spent together. The paper draws on the data gathered over a fifteen month period, mid January 2008 to April 2009 for two other studies, (see Naidu 2008 and Naidu 2009) with migrant Hindu and Muslim workers from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

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Levitt, 'Transnational migration: taking stock and future directions" in *Global Networks* 1, 3 (2000), 195-216.

[5] Gardner and Grillo, 179.

The first study,[6] Naidu 2008, showed that the Hindu transnational salon workers in the Reservoir Hills area of Durban, South Africa, could be understood as 'commodities' positioned in global consumption, and held a mirror to certain aspects of transnationalised Hinduism. The paper sought to focus the enquiry on the transnationalised lives of migrant Hindu workers in their attempt to articulate being 'Hindu' in a transnational social space. The second study[7], Naidu 2009, widened the sample net to include both Hindu and Muslim transnationals working in a number of salons, restaurants and tailoring 'shops' in the suburbs of Durban in KwaZulu Natal. The paper worked through the sociological concepts of "networking" and "knowing"[8] to show how the Indian[9] and Pakistani migrants came to settle into particular contexts of labour in the greater Durban area. The paper reflected upon the discursive pathways of the Indian and Pakistani migrants' transnationalised working lives and probed how linkages of labour and social acquaintance occur at the individual level through the closely knitted processes of knowing and networking.

While writing the papers, I was struck by both the bi-focally lived lives of the Hindu and Muslim migrants who straddled particular geo-cultural spaces as they weaved back and forth between their homeland and the receiving land, as well as the articulation of their lives along particular networks and ties in their efforts to re-territorialize themselves locally (see Naidu 2009). It appeared that networks were vital to the social lives of the migrants. It also appeared that these networks (with other migrant friends, families and acquaintances) functioned as a kind of 'social glue' and worked to bring the migrants together to share time in a common articulation of religious beliefs and practices (among other social practices).

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[6] M. Naidu, "The Global Mobile Subject: Mobility and Transnationalising Hinduism" in *Nidan Journal for the Study of Hinduism* 32, (2008), 16-32.

[7] Naidu, M. "Tied to Each Other: Transnationalised Work and Workers" in *The Anthropologist* (2009), forthcoming.

[8] J. Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: mobilities for the twenty-first century*. New York: Rout ledge, 2002 and Urry, J. *Mobilities*. Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 2007.

[9] 'Indian' in the South African context and the way it is used in this paper is used to refer to people who were originally from what are now Bangladesh, and thus the experiences of the participants from Bangladesh is subsumed under 'Indian from India'. The geo-political label of 'Pakistani' is retained as the local South Africans see this particular distinction.

Transnationalism as a "social morphology"[10] can be seen as evolving increasingly finer grained scholarship, and Voigt-Graf[11], also Portes[12], point out that there are particular typologies of transnational flows. Guarnizo and Smith[13] speak of 'transnationalism from below' or the routinized daily activities of transnational individuals. Religious practices, one contends, are to be seen as part and parcel of such 'routinized activities'. And the fact that there are numerous small enclaves of transnational migrant workers scattered throughout the suburbs of Durban, bears out the contention that the 'transnational' does not necessarily connote large numbers of individuals. These scattered numbers[14] of individuals typify, increasingly, movement of many kinds, but especially migration for work or refuge[15]. Within the context of this study it was also found that this form of individualized migrant mobility, where the migrant workers chose to come without the supporting entourage of the rest of their families, parents or wives, was noticeably 'masculinized'. Thus all thirty participants (both single and married) in the initial 2009 study were male, between the ages of twenty two and thirty five. In a bid to allow the reader a greater sense of ethnographic 'seeing', the participants' names (with their permission) are used when narrative examples are drawn from the participants' experiences.

## 3. Religion (in Transnational Spaces)

Kelly states:

> People travel internationally and live temporarily in other countries for leisure and work-related activities that may have nothing to do

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[10] S. Vertovec,""Migration and Other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization" in *International Migration Review* 37, 3 (2003), 641-665.

[11] C. Voigt-Graf, "Towards a Geography of transnational spaces: Indian transnational communities in Australia" in *Global Networks* 4, 1 (2004), 25-49.

[12] A. Portes, "Introduction: the debates and significance of immigrant transnationalism" in *Global Networks* 1, 3 (2001), 181-193.

[13] L E. Guarnizo and S P. Smith, "The locations of transnationalism", In: M. P. Smith and L. E. Guarnizo eds., *Transnationalism from below: comparative urban and community research*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998, pp 3- 34.

[14] Poros also speaks of transnationalism at the level of the individual see M V. Poros, "The role of migrant networks in linking local labour markets: the case of Asian Indian migration to New York and London" in *Global Networks* 1, 3 (2001), 243-259.

[15] S. Castles and M J Miller, *The age of migration*. London: Macmillan, 1993.

> with religion, and yet insofar as they are religious people, their religious beliefs and practices are involved.[16]

This is the point of insertion for this particular paper. The migrants in this study were not assembled into any large international or national congregational body attached to the homeland or sending society. The literature on transnationalism shows that for transnationals, religious networks often serve as networks of recruitment into civic or political engagement. This type of large scale organized transnational religious activity (amongst Asians practicing Hinduism or Islam) has been captured in many studies.[17] However, the migrants' transnational religious practices in *this* study are not to be understood in organizational terms, as articulating their religious worldview through large religious organizations. The paper holds that migrants' transnational religious practices, are also frequently enacted *outside* of organized settings.

The paper attempts to show that, insofar as the migrants are people who come from the rich socio-religious landscapes of Hinduism and Islam, they can be seen as drawing from these backgrounds. They can be seen as sharing religious space and religious festival time as a kind of resource or capital that functions to keep them connected to each other in a foreign space. This sums up the position of the Hindu research participants and several of the Muslim participants. These migrants did not claim to be fervently religious. Nor did their behaviour suggest this in any overt manner. These transnational workers also did not have any affiliations with large national, international Muslim or Hindu religious bodies. But in so far as they were *practicing Hindus* and *practicing Muslims*, and saw themselves as *being Hindu and Muslim*, their religious beliefs and practices were *necessarily* involved.

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[16] J D. Kelly, "Time and the Global: Against the Homogenous, Empty Communities in Contemporary Social Theory", In: Birgit Meyer and Peter Geschiere eds., *Globalisation and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure*. Oxford UK: Blackwell, 2003, 239.

[17] See B. Williams, "Asian Indian and Pakistani Religions in the United States" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 558 (1998), 178-195; P. Kurien, "Religion, ethnicity, and politics: Hindus and Muslim Indian immigrants in the United States" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24 (2001), 263-93; P. Levitt, "Redefining the Boundaries of Belonging: The Institutional Character of Transnational Religious Life" in *Sociology of Religion* 65, 1 (2004), 1-18.

Religion itself is not a fixed set of elements; beliefs, rituals, practices etc., but a dynamic matrix and web of shared meanings used in diverse ways, in diverse contexts[18] and more increasingly, in the transnational spaces that are culturally foreign to newly arriving transmigrants. For the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, religion was a distinctive part of the cultural system. Religion was "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms" through which we are said to "communicate, perpetuate, and develop" our "knowledge about and attitudes toward life"[19]. If we are to go along with Levitt's contention that transnational migrants use religion and religious icons and sacred spaces and acts to mark and to delineate a "cartography of belonging"[20] we see that transnationals may well use participation in religious practices to communicate, perpetuate, and develop their ideas and attitudes about themselves, in a bid to re-territorialize themselves in the receiving country.

## 4. The Notion of Social Capital

Social capital, as a sociological concept, has emerged as something of a trendy label in the social sciences. Portes[21] points out that the original theoretical development of the concept of 'social capital' by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the American sociologist James Coleman centered on *individuals* or *small groups* as the units of analysis, and on the benefits accruing to individuals *because of their ties* with others. These theorists defined social capital in terms of a *resource* to which an individual has access to, and is able to use for his or her benefit. Simply put, social capital is a reference to the resource embedded in the connections (of goodwill that can be called upon) *within* and *between* social networks. For a community, frequent cooperation by its members leads to tighter social linkages and increased trust in one another, described as a "virtuous circle" of participation and trust.[22]

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[18] K. Gardner, *Global Migrants, Local Lives.* Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1995.

[19] C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", In: Banton M. ed., *Anthropological Approaches to the study of Religion.* London: Tavistock (1966), 89.

[20] P. Levitt, "You Know, Abraham Was Really the First Immigrant: Religion and Transnational Migration" in *International Migration Review* 37, 3 (2003), 861.

[21] A. Portes, "The Two Meanings of Social Capital" in *Sociological Forum* 15, 1 (2000), 2.

[22] S. Janjuha-Jivraj, "The Sustainability of Social Capital within Ethnic Networks" in *Journal of Business Ethics* 47, 1 (2003) 32.

The concept of social capital is thus further encapsulated in networks, norms, and according to Farr, in the aspect of 'trust'. For Farr, networks are dense and valuable, norms pervade the networks and social relations and trust is construed as psychologically complex. Farr[23] states;

> Putting these elements together, social capital is complexly conceptualized as the network of associations, activities, or relations that bind people together as a community via certain norms and psychological capacities, notably trust…[24]

Lockhart[25] spells out that 'bonding' social capital describes the strength of relationships where people demonstrate concern and support for one another. 'Bridging' social capital on the other hand, creates relationships over social divisions, such as those based on race or class, allowing people to gain assets beyond their usual social groups.

## 5. ***Religion*** as Social Capital

Resources such as financing, labour, information and other forms of support are often cited as examples of social capital available. However, later scholarship[26] has also revealed that social ties are developed through religious participation,[27] which often crosses status barriers and helps cement community cohesion.

Thieme[28] points out that worldwide, an increasing number of people are diversifying their income through international migration and through seeking employment in the global market. He adds though, that this particular kind of movement, out of the country, mainly involves only parts of the family migrating. Thus, people's livelihoods are said to take on a multi-local dimension. In all instances involving the 30 participants in this particular study, we find that they travelled looking for work in South Africa without the supporting entourage of family. Some of the migrants did have family members who had migrated a few months or a few years earlier, but they themselves made the passage across geographic borders, by themselves. To cope with their 'multi-locality' the participants in this study appear to have entered meaningful transnational networks with other migrant family and friends[29] within which they shared social and religious time.

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[23] J. Farr, "Social Capital: A Conceptual History" in *Political Theory* 32, 1 (2004), 6-33.

[24] Farr, 8-9.

[25] W H. Lockhart, "Building Bridges and Bonds: Generating Social Capital in Secular and Faith-Based Poverty-to-Work Programs" in *Sociology of Religion* 66, 1 (2005), 46.

[26] See N T. Ammerman, *Congregation and community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997; R A. Cnaan, S C. Boddie, E. Handy, G. Yancey R. and Schneider, *The invisible caring hand: American congregations and the provision of welfare*. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

[27] Lockhart, 47.

[28] S. Thieme, "Sustaining Livelihoods in Multi-local Settings: Possible Theoretical Linkages between Transnational Migration and Livelihood Studies" in *Mobilities* 3, 1 (2008), 51-71.

The concept of social capital has also accreted to itself much conceptual opaqueness that in some instances, clouds the term because of the mutable and varying definitions imposed by different scholars.[30] The paper however, takes as its starting point that social capital is to be understood as working on the level of the individual and small group. The paper draws on the work by Adler and Kwon[31] and extracts some salient points from their discussion on social capital and argues that religion and religious practices are to be understood as a resource drawn upon by the individual migrant workers. The argument is that religion (re)emerges in these particular transnational contexts and functions as a form of social capital to reinforce group cohesion in transnational spaces.

Adler and Kwon's[32] discussion on social capital raises many important points. Three points are extracted to put into a conversation with the issues in the paper. The points listed below all 'bleed into', or organically lead one into another as they are closely related, and are:

- Social capital is encapsulated in 'solidarity'.
- Social capital is 'appropriable'.
- Social capital is 'convertible'.

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[29] Naidu 2008; 2009.

[30] See R D. Putnam, *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000; Portes, 2000; F J. Schuurman, "Social Capital: the politico-emancipatory potential of a disputed Concept" *Third World Quarterly* 24, 6 (2003), 991-1010.

[31] Adler and Kwon (2002) P S. Adler and S. Kwon, "Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept" in *The Academy of Management Review* 27, 1 (2002), 17-40.

[32] Adler and Kwon, 21-22

## 6. Social Capital Is Encapsulated in 'Solidarity'

"Important forms of solidarity can emerge from strong ties and even from weak ties, or at least weak ties that bridge otherwise unconnected groups."[33] Perhaps one place to begin is with the Hindu religious proverb, *vasudhaiva kutumbakum,* or 'the world is one family'. This 'family' as we come to see,[34] is one of dense networked connectivity. Tushar is a young Hindu male, having arrived in South Africa about two and half years ago. He had initially lived with his uncle (from India) with whom he already had ties with. He had later moved out to live with his work colleagues, the two cousins Kamal and Rakesh from the salon that they all worked in. The salon worked as a bridge linking Tushar to the cousins. The ties with Kamal and Rakesh had been forged in their common work place and had led to a more intense connection amongst the three, fed by their mutual Hindu backgrounds (in Gujarat) and their interests as young twenty-something year olds. With Tushar, Kamal had also found someone, who would (more readily than Rakesh) accompany him to the *Sapta Mandir,* or temple that was within walking distance of the salon. The participants tell me that they had been told about this temple by some of the local Gujarati-speaking Hindus. Although the ties with the local Hindus appeared weak[35] these weak ties helped bridge and connect Tushar to Kamal. When two local Hindus asked why *only* Kamal came to the Temple, Tushar was alerted to the proximity of the temple. As this was prior to Tushar sharing accommodation with Kamal, this was an important piece of information, and acted as a bridge that drew Tushar closer to Kamal. Kamal and Tushar later narrated that they visited the *Sapta Mandir* which sat further up the road from their work place, every Sunday.

Social capital's sources lie, according to Adler and Kwon[36] in the social structure within which the actor is located, and is the resource available to actors *as a function of their location* in the structure of their social relations. Adler and Kwon[37] additionally point out that social capital is 'located' not in the actors, but *in their relations* with other actors. At a 'one on one' interview[38] with Tushar, he talks about his communal living arrangements with the other two Hindu transnationals. All three had arrived at their employment, literally through their nodal networking and associative ties with each other. He shares that they have a central Hindu lamp for domestic worship at their rented home. All three migrants had apparently each brought their own Hindu sacred "*Lakshmi*" lamps from India. They had given two lamps to other friends, who were likewise from Gujarat, as they felt that these friends needed to also have a lamp at home. This aspect of identifying with each other and sympathizing with each others needs seemed to surface in much of the interactions amongst the migrants. This mutual recognition appeared more pronounced around certain aspects of the migrants' professed religion. Farr[39] notes that amongst transnationals, sympathy was a capacity "that could be cultivated to understand and identify commonalities with others". Although they claimed not to be "too religious", they confessed that they liked to both socialize amongst one another, as well as enjoying observing aspects of Hinduism amongst each other. They claimed that "this felt good" and "reminded" them of how they "would feel back home".

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[33] Adler and Kwon, 30.
[34] Naidu, 2008; 2009.
[35] Naidu, 2008.
[36] Adler and Kwon, 18
[37] Adler and Kwon, 22
[38] See Naidu, 2008.

Tushar communicates that they all now pray at the single lamp. Tushar confides that his parents sent him from India with a lamp so that he would continue to pray. He added that although he was "not very religious", had the parents not sent a lamp with him, he would have purchased one in South Africa because "it was important". Their narrative reveals that all three friends took turns to 'wash', 'shine' and 'apply kum-kum' to the lamp, all acts performed fastidiously in most Hindu households. Rakesh later confides that if he were living alone, he might well have been lazy to "take very good care of the lamp". It seemed that the communal context of being amongst other Hindu friends provided an impetus for the sacred routine around "taking care" of the lamp. It was also, more importantly, a focal point around which the three migrants gathered. They also confide that although their prayers were simple prayers asking for "good health" and "good business" etc., it was also a time when they felt "more as one", and connected to each other. It seemed that they were attempting to articulate a sense of belonging, solidarity and connection with each other and the loved ones they had left behind in the sending society.

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[39] Farr, 10.

Thus, while these were al religious 'tasks' that they would have certainly also performed back home, it appeared that these same observances assumed greater meaning in the transnational environment. In the circumstances of having to inhabit a foreign transnational space, these 'small' religious rituals and activities were performed with a heightened awareness and worked to connect the migrants empathetically and emotionally to each other.

With transmigration, groupings and networks may well take on a new significance or perhaps acquire a significance they previously did not have, with their members drawn together by the rituals (no matter how 'small' or 'routine') in which they participate.[40] The migrant workers communicate that they pray three times daily, at home in the morning, in the workplace and again at the home lamp in the evening. Tushar mentioned that he also reads the *Hanuman Chalisa* at his rented home, and when he has time at the salon, although he confessed that he was "too lazy" to do this back home. He tells me that these acts keep him "closer to home". It seemed that it was not so much that the migrants were claiming that they were keeping their religion alive, but rather that they were keeping alive, *their connection with their family,* through such observances.

All three migrants also observed the *Katha* and *Jundha*, at their (migrant) Gujarati family homes. They point out that in India they attended *Jundha* or the flag ritual at the temple and *Katha* as a household ritual. They felt that it was important to attend such rituals and prayers here in South Africa because it was a time that they 'met up with family and good friends", or just as importantly "made new friends" from amongst the acquaintances of mutual friends. The participants are meaning of course family and friends, as in other transnational friends and family, wherein they felt there was present, trust and norms of reciprocity.

Instead of forming singular migrant communities that attempt to keep in touch with home, these migrants have slipped into smaller networks with a multiplicity of nodes. They have not joined a religious congregation or international religious network like the VPH so prominent in the USA, especially for its efforts in globalizing Hinduism. Nor did they seek out a community through which to assert their Hindu identity, rather they have become part of networks with a multiplicity of nodes that allow them to both socialize, and enunciate their 'being Hindu' amongst other migrant Gujarati family and friends as they share communal religious time, that also supports a connection with those left behind in the sending societies. If 'goodwill' forms the substance of social capital, it's "effects flow from the solidarity that such goodwill in turn makes available"[41].

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[40] Gardner and Grillo, 182/183.

### 7. Social Capital Is 'Appropriable'

> Like physical capital, which can be used for different purposes social capital is appropriable in the sense that an actor's network of, say, friendship ties can be used for other purposes, such as information gathering or advice.[42]

All three participants, Kamal, Rakesh and Tushar claimed that in South Africa, they "have a social family" (of migrant Gujarati friends and relatives), but in India they "have a biological family". The transnational migrants appear to have created their own networks of mainly Gujarati family and friends, or joined existing ones. The migrants speak about being "one family" and that it is a "small world", where many "come to be known to each other". Their (small) world appears as a cohesively networked "multiplexed" world, where workers are sometimes linked also by family or acquaintance ties[43] within which there is frequency of group contact and reciprocal favours.[44]

Kamal, Rakesh and Tushar routinely "swop" around their weekly day off so that they may run errands or stand in for the friend who may be ill. Although initially coy about telling me, they later confide that they frequently have each other in their prayers. This was also borne out by many Muslim transnationals who worked in the adjacent tailoring "shop". Mubarak, who owned the tailoring establishment, next to the salon, and the Muslim waiters from Bangladesh who worked at the restaurant also sitting adjacent to the salon, all seemed to both socialize and worship together. They too offered and reciprocated such favours by standing in, or working extra shifts for the friends that they worshipped with. In many instances the migrants, both Muslim and Hindu referred to their close migrant friends as their "brothers". While the Muslim and Hindu transnationals, effortlessly and seamlessly crossed ethnic to socialise together, they chose not to attend the communal prayers and festivals of each other's religious affiliations. It seemed that while both socializing and worshipping acted to bond them together cohesively, it was the many embedded acts of religious observances that further and more deeply cemented their cohesiveness.

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[41] Adler and Kwon, 2002.

[42] Adler and Kwon, 21.

[43] Portes, 1995, 10.

[44] S. Vertovec, "Migration and Other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization" in *International Migration Review* 37, 3 (2003), 647.

While the Muslim participants communicated that they were also fastidious about the prayer routine back in Pakistan or India, they shared that it was especially important in the transnational context as they felt that these religious rituals anchored them with other members of the transnational family, even in the "tougher times" in a foreign country. The 'family' becomes a site of belonging according to Chamberlain and Leydesdorff[45]. This (family) site, in the context of transnationals, is fluidly reconstructed between the different domains of work and home and beyond discernable kinship belonging. As "actors in networks of exchange relationships"[46] the transnational workers, Gautam, a Brahmin and Kumar a non-Brahmin, like Kamal and his friends, had circumvented, traditional cleavages of social status and had established their own circle of migrant friends in and around the area. They socialized weekly with these friends, and shared festival time such as the celebration of *Diwali,* and ritual time such as the religious *Katha*.

Shabir was a Muslim male from Surat, India who had come to South Africa three years ago and worked as a waiter working in the popular *My Diner* chain of restaurants. Although missing his wife and family who were back in Bangladesh, Shabir confessed to be content in South Africa as he had many "relations" here, "to help" him. He joined the other Muslim migrants when visiting the local mosque, many of whom were also the same co-workers at the restaurant. Mdalom, a Muslim transnational from Bangladesh, also worked as a waiter in the *My Diner* restaurant. He reveals that his cousin had helped him "get the job" as waiter at *My Diner* where he had now been for a few months. He shares that it had been relatively easy for the cousin to help him with employment as this particular cousin attended the same mosque that many waiters from the restaurant gathered for worship. Additionally the owners of *My Diner*, themselves well established Muslim transnationals from Bangladesh, attended the same mosque, making that particular space a fortuitous gathering hub for transnationals wishing, among other things, to move into positions of employment.

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[45] M. Chamberlain and S. Leydesdorff, "Transnational families: memories and narratives" in *Global Networks* 4, 3 (2004), 232.

[46] K S. Cook and J. M. Whitmeyer, "Two Approaches to Social Structure: Exchange Theory and Network Analysis" in *Annual Review of Sociology* 18, (1992), 115.

### 8. Social Capital Is 'Convertible'

> Moreover, social capital can be 'converted' (Bourdieu, 1985 cited in Adler and Kwon 2002) to other kinds of capital. The advantages conferred by one's position in a social network can be converted to economic or other advantage.[47]

Social network theory unveils how *nodes* or the actors in the networks and *ties* or relationships between the actors function within various networks. Critical concepts of 'degree' and 'cohesion' allow a further unpacking of *how* the migrant participants are connected, and to *whom*, with the concept of cohesion being vital in our understanding that other transnational relatives and friends (however immediate or distant) connect the migrants cohesively and directly through routine rituals of worship. Mohammed, a Muslim transnational from Bangladesh reveals that when he arrived in Durban, he did not know many people. Mohammed narrated that he came across many other "Muslims from India and Bangladesh" in his weekly visits to the local mosque. By praying together communally a certain level of familiarity and trust had become established and these meetings for prayer were also important times when information regarding potential employment was shared amongst the migrants. In other words a certain level of 'converting' (of capital) was taking place. The unemployed transnationals were able to convert their friendships erected through communal prayer, to networks of information sharing, that placed them potentially closer to employment showing how even communal worship time and space can act as mechanisms that come to constitute social capital. Exemplifying Smart and Smart's[48] words that bodies are indeed "located in particular [transnational] places", Yunus, a thirty year old Muslim from Gujarat in India shares that he too "heard of work" in one of the weekly prayer gatherings. Employment opportunities appear to thus develop around communal meeting spaces for worship, building on social capital to generate mutually beneficial relationships that are able to satisfy multiple needs. The naturally assembled hubs or sites of 'gathering' (as in the mosque) within the network allows for cliques or spaces with a greater coherence and density of transmigrants than that of other parts of the network, and a corresponding density of social capital. Many scholars point out that social capital is the fungibility channel, through which one form of capital can be changed into another, which benefits the individual.

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[47] Adler and Kwon, 21.

[48] A. Smart and J. Smart, "Urbanization and the Global Perspective" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32, (2003), 274.

Closely knitted social networks are seen as pools of popular agency and are embedded in popular relations of solidarity and reciprocity that allow transnational individuals (or marginalized groups) to circumvent structures of exclusion within the wider society.[49] The migrants are aware of their dislocation (from those at home as well as in some instances, from the local people), but attempt to live as fully as possible through the multiple nodes of connectivity available to them. They thus excavate themselves out of potential social and economic marginality as they articulate their social selves within the web of interactions and lived experiences *with other migrants*.

Networks are of course not in any way permanently stable but are rather fluidly being socially constructed and altered by newly arriving members. However, the networks still manage to maintain their cohesiveness and closure. Adler and Kwon[50] emphasize that strong social norms and beliefs, are "associated with a high degree of closure of the social network". This closure is of course maintained in this particular context, by the religious commonality of the Muslim transnationals who reciprocate with opportunities of employment and often, also accommodation.

## 9. Conclusion

One needs to recognize the considerable availability of informal pockets of support structures that exist outside of large institutional religious networks, and look inside smaller enclaves or groups of people who share religious space or religious time. According to Gargiulo and Benassi[51], the members of a (small) knitted network can trust each other to honour various obligations across the domains of work and their social lives. These kinds of ties are important for the benefits they offer to individuals, as revealed by the ethnographic narratives of the participants. Religion is a social capital 'resource' that inheres in the social network, "tying focal actors to other actors"[52], as in the case of the migrant businessmen at the mosque, who were able to offer other migrant workers employment, or in the case of the Hindu transnational Kamal who was able to introduce Tushar to the sacred temple. Farr[53] talks about social capital as the 'statuses that individuals accrued or lent as a result of their group activities. Thus, inherent within the social networks is a level of "functionality of the flows between the nodes"[54]. Worship rituals, whether large scale and social as in festival and religious celebrations, or the everyday routinized activities and practices of daily or weekly congregational worship at a temple or mosque, as well as the domestic household rituals and observances, offer a window into understanding that religion remerges in a transnational context and works to connect the migrants.[55] These observances of rituals and festivals, and communal worship emerge as crucial transnational socio-religious enactments, enhancing group collectivity and cohesiveness.

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[49] K. Meagher, "Social capital or analytical liability? Social networks and African informal economies" in *Global Networks* 53, (2005), 220.

[50] Adler and Kwon, 29.

[51] M. Gargiulo and M. Benassi, "Trapped in Your Own Net? Network Cohesion, Structural Holes, and the Adaptation of Social Capital', *Organisation Science* 11, 2 (2000), 184.

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[52] Adler and Kwon, 19.

[53] Farr, 8-9.

[54] Schuurman, 999.

[55] Gardner and Grillo 2002: 183.

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# A BUDDHIST CRITIQUE OF LIBERALISM'S APPEAL TO GLOBAL JUSTICE

**Leon Miller** ♦

## 1. Introduction

The prominent business ethics scholar Manuel Velasquez describes business ethics as "The application of an understanding of what is good and right to transactions and pursuits that we call business. It begins with providing a framework of basic principles for understanding what is meant by the terms good and right."[1] The global financial crisis raises concerns about the principles guiding social systems in their attempt to produce and distribute the materials needed so that the members of the society enjoy an enriched quality of life. From the Buddhist perspective individual ingenuity is intended to increase personal and social benefits. For this reason the increase of prosperity is not only viewed as the concern of the private business individual, but also a concern shared by the entire social system. Thus there is necessarily a dimension to the study of business ethics that relates to concerns about social justice – as there must be guidelines to insure that business benefits (does not hurt) public interests.

Many scholars of business ethics are now convinced that the discipline must include a study of the principles guiding social systems in their attempt to produce and fairly distribute the materials needed to enhance the quality of life of its members. Therefore, the justice aspect to business ethics necessarily involves asserting principles that assure that the institutions upon which society relies do not hurt public interests. Our notion of social justice is based on the belief that the common good can be achieved by means of a "Contractual" arrangement between individuals and social institutions who agree not to hurt public interests. Ethics, from the perspective of social responsibility, is concerned with increasing both personal profits and distributive benefits for the least advantaged of the society.

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[1] Manuel G. Velasquez, *Business Ethics: Concepts and Cases*, New Jersey: The Pearson Education International Division of Prentice Hall Publishing, 2006, 1.

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Economic activity is one of the cornerstones of society, thus economics as one the key institutions of society plays an important role in increasing happiness and the quality of life. For this reason Buddhism has always recognized that prosperity is a significant component of the good life, because discomfort takes away from one's ability to focus on enlightenment. Not that wealth is necessary for true happiness but comforts do contribute to eliminating certain distractions from happiness that can occur if one's focus is stuck on what one lacks. Thus classical ethics and Buddhist ethics recognized that prosperity is important for contributing to an overall sense of well-being. Ethics then provides insight into how to experience prosperity in ways that do not result in misfortune.[2] Faced with the challenges of globalization many Buddhist ethicists are now emphasizing that Buddhist principles explicate how to increase prosperity because practitioners gain insight into what contributes to the overall elevation of humanity (individual and societal). Thus Buddhism provides insight into enhancing the prosperity of the individual in ways that reflect well on the person's character.

The application of the basic principles of the Buddhist approach to economic transactions calls for a particular perspective on moral reasoning. In the classical study of ethics this mental aspect of what produces beneficial outcomes and helps to avoid harmful results is referred to as prudence.[3] Prudence is a particular way the mind can be disciplined to produce very desirable results. Far Eastern Buddhists refer to prudence as *yonisomanasikara*. *Yonisomanasikara* is a type of ingenuity that induces the realization of how a person can experience his or her highest good while at the same time increasing benefits to others.

Both Buddha and Aristotle presume that the primary value worth pursuing in life is happiness. They both recognized that wealth is an important factor in being able to enjoy "the good life." For Buddhism the role of material security in relationship to true happiness is exemplified by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Material needs do indeed provide the base, for without this people are disposed to being mentally distracted from concentration on their higher level needs. But once material needs are satisfied there is a realization that they are not the end within themselves; there are still higher level values worth pursuing.

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[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackman, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994, VI ix.

[3] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI ii.

The current financial crisis raises concerns about business ethics because the consequences have clearly created damages to public interests. Indeed ethics is important here because the principles prescribing the contractual agreement must be re-evaluated when institutions harm public interests. The current financial crisis makes evident an ethical problem because the basic principle of "compassion for all sentient beings" has clearly been violated resulting in damages on a global scale. We cannot conceive of a well-ordered society where some of the most powerful and wealthy protect their private interests while hurting public interests. A nation with business practices based on an ethics allowing global public interests to be hurt is in need of serious "soul searching" and "collective self reflection."

We must remember that the scope of the problem reflects not only the way in which business is conducted but raises questions concerning some of the fundamental principles of Western Liberalism. Thus the scope of the problem involves a collective mindset. Insight into the full scope of the problem requires an extensive exploration of the underlying collective perspective on existence that is reflected in certain value and ethical choices. An investigation of the crisis must include a comprehensive analysis of the way in which business practices reflect the collective Western mindset. The discrepancy with Liberalism's business ethics puts critics in a position to attack claims of the apparent moral superiority of capitalism. The dialogue with critics necessarily involves a re-examination of the Enlightenment principles that are the basis of some of the most cherished notions of Western Civilization.

The far reaching consequences of the crisis will demand a profound response. One that has the insight to accurately identify the value crisis while offering remedies that can guide society back onto a flourishing path. Given the extent of the problem it is necessary to carefully discern how we can move ahead into a better future in a way that allows society to uphold its most treasured principles while altering those patterns that have caused failure at realizing society's most cherished values. To adequately address this problem demands more than a comprehensive scrutiny of the financial decisions that led to the crisis. I propose that Buddhist ethics and psychology offer a perspective on the issues that is profound enough to both address the problem and provide a remedy.

The overall format for the article uses a typical Buddhist approach for addressing the mindset that causes misfortune, eliminating the troublesome mindset and ultimately moving toward the experience of "Enlightenment." The first section of the article investigates the ethical misconceptions that precipitated the current financial crisis. An overview of the collective value perspective and the subsequent business practices creating misfortune will be explored. The second section of the article concludes the investigation of the troublesome mindset and introduces ethical insights into how to increase prosperity and well-being. The third section of the article explains how to move past the ethical misconceptions of the recent past and move ahead toward a more progressive interpretation of the Enlightenment project.

## 2. The Mindset that Creates Misfortune

John Fullerton, the former Managing Director of JP Morgan, stated that "Our global economic system is broken! With the global credit crisis, and the ensuing financial turmoil *the stability and even viability of our freewheeling, complex and interconnected global financial system has come into question.* Even "experts" are scrambling for answers as they reinvent the purpose and practices of major institutions including even the Federal Reserve Bank itself."[4] I add that the global financial crisis is evidence of a problematic business ethics mindset for several reasons.

First, the overall American economy provides an unusually high level of prosperity for increased numbers of individuals. This has prompted a standard of living that makes America powerful and materialistically attractive in the eyes of much of the world. But the emphasis on satisfying superficial materialistic desires also gives the appearance that less essential values dominate the society. The impression that America markets superficial values overshadows recognition of America's deeper values (a deep respect for religious values and the principles admonished by classical ethics plus a devotion to Enlightenment ethical principles). We have in fact increasingly betrayed some of our most fundamental principles resulting in a painful lack of collective authenticity and integrity.

Secondly there has been adherence to an ontology that results in a dualistic fragmentation. Western dualism, following Descartes, cuts the self off from significant intersubjective ties. Scholars have become increasingly aware that dualism is creating problematic consequences with our environment, social relations and economic transactions. All of these are also wearing away the "goodwill" America has enjoyed in the eyes of the world. Such actions are not only betraying our fundamental values but presenting negative impressions of our national character. To remedy this problem requires a constructive analysis of the mindset that produces misfortune. We must realize that the current economic tendency of a one-dimensional perspective on life will tend to result in misfortune. This involves putting what has happened into a perspective that would allow reflection on the inadequacies of the current value mindset.

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[4] John Fullerton, "The Relevance of E. F. Schumacher in the Twenty First Century," www.smallisbeautiful.org, 1.

Modernity did empower, thus elevate, the status of the individual with its confidence in rationality as the means of maximizing personal and social utility. Business expands this into an ethical conviction that "rational choice" is the means of maximizing commercial utility. However measuring the success of a life merely in terms of its proposed increase in utility can have detrimental consequences for individuals, society and the international community. Problems occur when it encourages a particular mindset justifying actions that produce individual pleasure, satisfaction, happiness and/or profit without consideration of the "Socially Contracted" agreement to create the common good. The problematic mindset assumes that actions are justified if they allow the individual to increase personal benefits and escape undesirable outcomes.

Using utilitarian ethics to justify decisions regardless of their consequences to others can have drawbacks that are dangerous for the public. An example is the Ford Motor Company's decision to produce the Ford Pinto in spite of the fact that it had a design fault that could possibly result in severe injury or even fatality. Indeed some owners did experience severe injuries and some suffered fatalities due to the design fault. It appears that the mindset that led Ford's decision to produce the car was based on determining utility by means of a "cost analysis." A cost analysis measures possible gains, subtracts possible losses and on this basis decides whether the action is profitable. I assert that such a threat to the public good betrays the social contract (which some branches of Western social and political philosophy insisted as necessary to generate both concern for the welfare of others and the common good).

Economics, sometimes referred to as the "crown jewel" of the social sciences, plays a major role in the value perspective driving society's human interactions. When the primary focus of social interactions is concern for "the bottom line" self interest dominates. The most influential members of such a society become "trend setters." Others, following their example become convinced that the path to success demands rationally measuring what will quantitatively increase utility. Such economic interests tend to be one dimensional resulting in measuring the quality of life and happiness in terms of what will maximize benefits for the individual. This results in placing an emphasis on lesser, short-term, risky, superficial values while sacrificing more fulfilling and substantial values.

There are many psychologists who would agree that the basic human motivating principle is self preservation. They would add that this gives humanity a natural predisposition toward protecting or asserting self interests. From this perspective, asserting one's self interest would be to do what comes naturally. Buddha agreed that the basic motivating behaviour for humanity is the ego driven "pleasure principle." Buddhist psychology and Buddhist ethics state that adherence to the pleasure principle reflects an underdeveloped level of moral reasoning and poor ethical insight. Ethicists assert that such a mental outlook represents lack of prudence, thus does not reflect a character with good moral reasoning and is more likely to result in human suffering.

Pragmatist William James understood this basic Freudian pleasure instinct and agreed that it necessarily leads one to attempt a utilitarian increase in pleasure and enjoyment. The focus of a person acting on the basis of the pleasure principle is limited to increasing one's personal benefits. This is one way of explaining what Buddha meant by the Four Noble Truths: that a wrongful mindset can cause suffering, that suffering can be caused by greed, that a proper mental outlook can rid us of suffering, and finally, that the practice of "Enlightenment" principles will lead to the achievement of one's highest good.

Superficial, quick fixes based on speculation can supply some initial benefits, however because these superficial results do not satisfy deeper human needs, they only appeal to some superficial aspect of human desires. From the perspective of human growth psychology quick fixes, meant merely to provide immediate gratification, can in the end actually increase anxiety; even if they offer immediate gratification it soon fades and the person becomes anxious to fill the vacuum with another quick fix. The immediate financial problem results from an ongoing collective ethical problem that reflects the predominance of the pleasure principle over a preference for deeper values that bring long-term, lasting fulfilment.

We have been witnessing decisions not based on sound moral reasoning but on mere speculations.

Without a wholesome mindset a person's material pursuits can produce wealth but not necessarily happiness and peace of mind. Clinical Psychologist, Dr Alden Cass, the author of *Bullish Thinking*, conducted a research study of the psychological well-being of top Wall Street executives. The results showed that 23% of New York stockbrokers suffered from clinical depression, about three times the national average.[5] The Dalai Lama observed that "Those living in the most material abundance are in some ways less satisfied in spite of their affluent lifestyles. They are less happy and to some extent experience emotional suffering more than those living in the least developed countries."[6]

Buddhist principles state that psychological well-being is the primary quality that determines whether or not a person is able to enjoy true and lasting happiness. This begins with an understanding of the ethical perspective that is best for bringing about a person's most desired results (*samyag-di*) and then it moves toward applying this value perspective to all of one's actions (*Śīla*). Such a person is psychologically well-adjusted, is well-integrated with the social and natural environments, creates life enhancing interactions, increases prosperity and promotes human flourishing. By adhering to Buddhist psychological and ethical principles the troublesome mindset that creates misfortune is altered and one begins to realize that economic enterprises work best when they create both personal and social benefits. "From an economist's point of view the marvel of the Buddhist way of life is the utter rationality of the concept – amazingly small means producing extraordinarily satisfactory results."[7]

## 3. The Path to Eliminating Suffering

William R. Polk announced on several occasions in recent years that there is a particular value mindset at work in American culture that if not addressed would lead to a social and financial crisis. "The American society as a whole is facing a trauma that is not over yet. But, while all eyes are focused on the immediate financial crisis, there are aspects of it that we need to examine in order both to understand where we are and also to see what we need to consider if we are to be able to work through this crisis toward a more secure future."[8] Polk proposes putting what has happened into a perspective that would allow reflection on what must be understood if we are to make the future better for individuals and for the nation as a "body politic."

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[5] Julia Kollewe, "Fear is the New Mindset in the Irrational World of Finance," www.guardian.co.uk, Thursday 23 October 2008, 2.

[6] Dalai Lama, His Holiness (Tenzin Gytso), *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World*, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1999, 5.

[7] E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1989, 64.

Polk argues that the key to effectively managing the immediate crisis lies in investigating the underlying ethical perspective that has increasingly been driving Liberalism's policy and economic decisions. He claims that such an investigation reveals why America "lost all sense of modesty and caution."[9] Polk believes that the awareness of the need for such a critical reflection has been obvious for quite some time but the current crisis makes it inescapable. The current crisis not only calls into question the ethical basis of our financial decisions but also highlights the need for clarification of the ultimate values underlying society. This takes place in the form of a dialectical critique of our basic ethical assumptions.

Liberalism has an intention that each and every person will have the right to enjoy the good life in the way that each person believes will create his or her highest good. Justice theories of liberalism guarantee freedom of conscience (this freedom is promoted in terms of both positive and negative rights but does not allow interference with the positive and negative rights of others). The vision of universalizing human rights is indeed an extension of Western Civilization's cherished notion that each person possesses the natural right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

It was the claim of modernity that the Western style of democracy and its accompanying free market would deliver peace, freedom, liberty and prosperity. However recent history has made it clear that Liberalism's business ethics is not in line with Liberalism's justice claims. The attractiveness of Liberalism is diminished with the realization that the promise of enhanced individual well-being has in the end typically meant an increase in material consumption but does not necessarily increase contentment. It seems that big business believes it can reap the profits from the resources and labour of traditional cultures with no responsibility to deliver on Liberalism's claims of improved quality of life accompanied with increased peace and freedom. This gives the impression that big business fails to conceive of globalization in terms of more sustainable economic planning, a more equitable distribution of resources and a greater concern for protecting the environment.

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[8] William, R. Polk, "The Cleveland Century Club Lecture," September 2008, 1.

[9] Polk, "The Cleveland Century Club Lecture," 3.

The United Nations recognizes how important a partnership with the international business community is to improving international and intercultural relations. The United Nations acknowledges that "Never before have the objectives of the international community and the business world been so aligned. The UN asserts that if the global community is to realize the United Nations hopes of promoting the ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption there must be the full support of the international business community."[10] The global effort for altruism and international cooperation (all nations cooperating to promote the common global good in terms of peace and equitable human development) is thwarted when business assertively acts to increase its competitive advantage by skirting, and disregarding or flaunting normative principles for improved global justice.

Throughout the world people are challenged with adjusting to the demands of modernity while attempting to maintain their cultural values and traditions. Modernity is believed to create necessary progress (or development) that can result in economic prosperity when trade and finance are liberalized. Modernizing does result in some obvious immediate benefits, most recognizable by the increase in material production, consumption and consumerism. This soon becomes a new-found source for satisfaction based on both materialism and the ability to gratify sense desires. However there soon follows the realization that this is accompanied by disruption of traditional values, environmental disaster and a lack of deeper fulfilment.

Liberalism (typically accompanied by its counter-part free trade) promises to bring material prosperity to the cultures that open their doors to its free market. However many traditional cultures are realizing that consumerism comes with an almost religious appeal, luring people to sacrifice traditional values and traditional cultural worldviews for its sake. Buddhism provides a way to remedy the tension between traditional values and progressive development by offering the "Middle Way" (or balance) that helps the individual and society. The Buddhist economic approach offers a remedy to this problem by emphasizing that "New economic enterprises that are introduced which depend on foreign capital, technology and expertise (such as are in no way inherent in the recipient society) must work in alignment with local traditions in order for them to promote healthy development."[11]

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[10] "United Nations Global Compact," The United Nations and Business, http://www.un.org/partners/business/index.asp.

An inquiry into Liberalism's problematic business ethics from the standpoint of Buddhism will provide insight into how to reconcile the difference between the ideal promises that Liberalism makes and the consequences it actually produces when traditional cultures experience the impact of globalization. This includes rectifying the discrepancy between the deeper values of Liberalism (justice, human rights, peace, liberty and prosperity for more of the world's people) and Liberalism's current business ethics. Buddhist ethics offers a constructive perspective to engage with the West in an effort to rectify this discrepancy. Buddhism does have a viable approach to socio-economic development that is in line with Liberalism's intention to protect the individual right to freedom of conscience. At the same time, Buddhism promotes a value perspective that helps to reduce Liberalism's problem of decreased effectiveness because its business ethics tendency to emphasize self interest.

Buddhist ethics asserts that while consumerism does represent development in material terms it gradually begins to reflect misconceptions about what brings true and lasting happiness. Ultimately, without the development of both moral reasoning and ethical insight consumerism tends to reflect a troublesome mindset that needs to be eliminated in order to reduce human suffering. The Eightfold Path is the Buddhist prescription for correcting the troublesome mindset. The Eightfold path has economic value as it results in *Anavajjasukha* – a certain state of mind that experiences economic life in a way that is wholesome (accompanied by an undisturbed consciousness). By perfecting the principles prescribed in the Eightfold Path a person develops a healthy mind that conceives of good economics as an increase in personal and social benefits.

When the troublesome mindset is replaced with wisdom (*panna*) it is possible to distinguish between what is of true benefit and what is not. This leads to the cultivation of the right motivation for acting (*chanda*), or the realization of a more skilful, much better and more fruitful way of conducting one's life affairs. On the basis of Buddhist psychological and ethical perspectives the troublesome mindset-that creates misfortune-is altered and one begins to realize that economic enterprises work best when they create both personal and social benefits. The difference lies in the fact that "Modern economics tries to maximize human satisfactions by the optimal pattern of consumption, while Buddhism tries to maximize consumption by the optimal pattern of productive effort."[12]

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[11] Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, 179.

## 4. Enlightenment as a Socio-Economic Phenomenon

Satisfaction of the individual desire for happiness plus an increase in the quality of human existence require adherence to principles that can guide "people" to a more enlightened life experience. Each person should be free to move toward this awakening without interference from social authorities. Thus, neither the state nor any other official should interfere with this "natural right." If we define Enlightenment as the elevation of the human experience then we recognize that the European Enlightenment promulgated a philosophy for achieving it based on modernity, progress and development. This was partially an attempt to restore the perennial insights of classical philosophy and humanism, along with an effort to find the best perspective from which to view ethics.

I claim that a more progressive approach to Enlightenment – as the elevation of the human experience – is necessarily inclusive of Buddhist ethics. This is especially evident because of problems with the current approach of Liberalism to business ethics. We need a reflective and dialectic inquiry into the ethical problems connected with globalization. This could result in Enlightenment in terms of insight into what would create the elevation of a larger number of the world's people and societies. By synthesizing the viewpoints of Buddhism with the Western visions of Enlightenment we gain a clearer vision of the ethical stance needed to achieve Enlightenment as the elevation of the human experience. Buddhist ethics and psychology share a common humanistic intention with the ethical hopes of the Western Enlightenment. Both envision that Enlightenment as an individual awakening would be recognized as naturally in the individual's best interest.

The reality of today's interconnected global economy makes it clear that the social advancement and economic prosperity that were envisioned in the Enlightenment cannot be thought of as limited to individuals and particular geographic regions. The challenge of globally protecting and promoting the individual's right to a better quality of life and a more enlightened life experience requires "a new level, a deeper level, of thinking based on the principles that accurately describe the territory of effectively being human and interacting effectively."[13] "Enlightenment as a Socio-Economic Phenomenon" stresses that an understanding of how to experience enlightenment as both an individual pursuit and a manifestation of global justice is revealed as a result of taking into consideration Buddhist ethics and psychology.

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[12] Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, 61.

Both Buddhism and Liberalism share the conviction that the Enlightenment of the individual will be reflected in how one shapes his or her social interactions and economic enterprises. Western and Buddhist visions of Enlightenment share the belief that each individual should have the complete freedom to act on the basis of conscience. Buddhist ethics and the Western notion of global justice envision individuals empowered by their own inner convictions to direct their lives toward the good life in the "here and now." Neither the state nor any other official should interfere with the individual's right to realize his or her highest good. This right is considered to be inherent in the nature of existence. Each person should be free to move toward this awakening without being the hindrance of society's economic and political pressures.

Buddhism, in many respects, agrees with the Western ethical motif to enhance public well-being and to elevate the global human experience. Buddhism acknowledges that Liberalism has a degree of global appeal in connection with growing appreciation for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Both visions of Enlightenment stress that each individual should have the complete liberty to act on the basis of freedom of conscience to pursue what is believed to bring the greatest amount of happiness. In Buddhism the almost complete elimination of outer authority encourages one to exercise the natural right to freedom of conscience. Freedom of conscience is important for Buddhist Enlightenment because it requires the right effort of an "autonomous free will."

Buddhism admonishes a deep respect and compassion for all other living things. From the Buddhist perspective rights apply to a moral self rather than to the individual promoting rights in an effort to protect self interests. To understand the full implication of "Rights" in this Buddhist sense demands some degree of compassion or sensitivity to the moral worth of fellow human beings. The Buddhist respect for all other sentient beings inspires the desire to live in harmony with others and within one's natural environment. The Buddhist sense of the individual's responsibility to do everything possible to create and maintain harmony corresponds with the Western notion of social responsibility.

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[13] Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York: Simon and Schuster Publishing, 1990, 42.

Western Liberals endeavour to eliminate the problem of self interest in international transactions by proposing a "Law of Peoples." "The Law of Peoples" presumes that international interactions are based on contractual agreements that establish the normative basis for the relationship. From this ideal Liberal perspective intercultural transactions are made up of discrete entities called "Peoples" who act as political agents in the development of a "Society of Peoples" and who will agree to principles of peaceful coexistence under the "Law of Peoples." The decision of how these principles apply between particular cultures would be determined in deliberation by the participants.[14] Liberalism believes that Justice works best when parties contractually agree to constitute the terms of their relationship from the perspective of "A Veil of Ignorance."

The "Veil of Ignorance" comes close to achieving what Buddhist ethics prescribe with its principles of "compassion" and "no self." The ideal of the veil of ignorance is believed to improve justice because parties would contractually agree not to plan policy based on what would bring the greatest benefit to oneself or any special interest group. Policy must be based on what will increase distributive benefits for the least advantaged. In this respect liberals believe "Peoples," constructively engaged in dialectic dialogue, can safeguard human rights on a global scale. "John Rawls' *Law of Peoples* offers a framework for a Buddhist theory of social justice. That is to say, it helps clarify the relation in Buddhism between the focus on self-nature and personal enlightenment (which is an ontological concern) and the need to think about the daily behaviour of the Buddhist practitioner in society (which is a phenomenal concern)."[15] In other words the enlightened individual influences society in such a way that contributes to enlightenment becoming a social phenomenon.

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[14] John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002, 32-33.

[15] Sungtaek Cho, "Selflessness: Toward a Buddhist Vision of Social Justice" Journal of Buddhist Ethics, vol. 7, 2000, 4.

Enlightenment principles (both East and West) share the premise that any reasonable person desires the right to decide what is in his or her best interest. Thus the primary postulation of Enlightenment as a Socio-Economic phenomenon is that any reasonable person would agree that it is best to cooperate in an effort to realize this Enlightenment aim. Prudence prompts the realization that personal profit, the public enjoyment of material prosperity and the conservation of common resources are all connected with improved cooperative interactions between the members of the global community. The value for such global cooperation interactions is depicted with the Buddhist principle *Pratītyasamutpāda* (interrelatedness or interdependency).[16]

The relevance of *Pratītyasamutpāda* is manifest in the global financial crisis in terms of the factor "Dependent Co-arising." Dependent Co-arising is the Buddhist explanation for the fact that the characteristics of the global financial system that can appear to represent divergent or contingent conditions actually reflect how essentially humanity is interconnected. Thus, the realization of interdependency encourages a preference for promoting cooperation and harmony. The economic aspect of this is based on the fact that historically cooperation in trade was an important factor for extending units of cooperative alliances.

Trade allowed for the redistribution of resources, the building or strengthening of relations and for improving nutrition. Improved nutrition was important for increasing physical strength and boosting mental capacities. These units of cooperative interactions enjoyed the best chances for survival and flourishing. Liberals envision today's global market playing a similar role to that played by trade throughout the human experience. Liberals believe that the quality of life for the world's people would be improved and international cooperation strengthened.

The key to realizing this on a global level lies in a re-examination of Liberalist ethics and a deeper appreciation for Enlightenment as a Socio-Economic Phenomenon. A dialectic re-examination of Modernity's ethical philosophy would make evident the need for a new basis for global social cohesion because Modernity's values stressed the predominance of the "Autonomous Individual."[17] From the Buddhist perspective a true

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[16] Hinichi Inoue, *Putting Buddhism to Work: A New Approach to Management and Business*, trans. Duncan Williams, Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1997, 1.

[17] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981, 149.

Enlightenment (hoped for by Modernity) would be reflected in a value perspective that "understood how to achieve the happiness – which is the ultimate end in the quest for good – but also avoid harms and dangers which could incur. This is achieved by increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good."[18] MacIntyre claimed that by demanding duty without enlightened insight into natural human inclinations we moved even deeper into human fragmentation, resulting in our modern ethical crisis. The remedy lies in a re-examination of classical ethics and a deeper appreciation for a dialogue with Buddhist ethics.

Buddhist principles have proven to be reliable path for individual Enlightenment (or has had an emphasis on the individual's Enlightenment). The best path to Enlightenment attempts to enhance the worth of the individual in a way that develops the person's capacities to the fullest."[19] The Buddhist approach to Enlightenment does also inspire the individual to contribute to enriching the quality of life for others. "Buddha says that this begins with correcting false values and gaining true knowledge of life's meaning."[20] With this perspective Buddhism serves as a source of inspiration and contributes to enriching the quality of life for a large segment of the world's people (individuals, cultures and nations).

Many Buddhist constituents are struggling with the pressure of trying to maintain a balanced, insightful life while attempting to manage modern economic pressures. Many are beginning to realize that to maintain a lifestyle of contentment one that is fundamentally committed to Right Livelihood there must be corresponding support from society in terms of equal rights, justice for all citizens in the society and rule of law. Without society promoting the accompanying political and economic values a person could have a desire to practice Right Livelihood but end up being disturbed by a split between the demands of the inner consciousness and those of the outer economic reality. Because of this many Buddhists are now defining the principles of Buddhism in ways that are beneficial for individuals while clarifying how individuals contribute to the common good. In this way Buddhist principles are proving to create personal growth and prosperity in ways compatible with increased over-all well-being and sustainability.

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[18] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204.

[19] Robert Smith, *Japanese Society: Tradition, Self and the Social Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 55.

[20] Nancy W Ross, *Three Ways of Asian Wisdom*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969, 91.

It is in this respect that the former Buddhist tendency to focus on individual Enlightenment is increasingly being expanded into advising constituents on how to adjust to globalization's impact on the individual's attempt at Right Livelihood. Buddhism, as a global phenomenon, is increasingly aware of the need to offer a critical response to the challenge imposed as a result of tension between global justice and global economics. Buddhist notions of social justice have in the past been premised on the claim that social good comes from individuals correcting the troublesome mindset and adhering to the Eightfold Path.

Buddhists are now increasingly recognizing that interdependent causation makes clear the necessity of dialectical deliberation on how to safeguard the rights of the individual in order to better facilitate the individual's right to pursue his or her highest good. In this respect Buddhist insights contribute to promoting flourishing economies by synthesizing the Eastern notion of personal self-transformation and the individual's search for personal happiness with the Western notion of Enlightenment as a globalized discourse on protecting the individual's search for personal happiness.

Thus based on recognizing the interdependence between the social and the individual Buddhists envision an enlightened approach to business ethics that would prompt three things: First is an economic system that creates individual wealth in a way that benefits public interests. Second is the vision of extending the principles connected with the Western notion of Social Contract to help resolve the problem between Liberalism and Communitarian values. This can be actualized based on the notion of cosmopolitanism, discourse politics, deliberative economic planning and contractual international relations. Third is an economic system intent on employing sustainable methods of using natural resources (eco-justice) and environmental planning inclusive of indigenous insights.

## 5. Conclusion

The global financial crisis has heightened awareness of our "Co-dependency." "We are long past the time when human activities and their effects can be neatly compartmentalized within nations, within sector (energy, agriculture, trade) and within broad areas of concern (environmental, economic, social, etc.). This applies in particular to the global crisis that has seized public concern."[21] The global financial crisis has made evident a problem with Liberalism's business ethics: there appears to be a dichotomy between the deeper values of Liberalism-justice, human rights, peace, liberty and prosperity for more of the world's people and the actual consequences of Liberalism when it comes to its current business ethics.

The far reaching consequences of the global financial crisis demand a powerful response that is adequate for addressing Liberalism's discrepancy. The response must be adequate for addressing the value crisis while offering remedies that can be of benefit for the individual and society. Buddhist psychology and ethics offer a relevant perspective from which we can critically examine the impulses motivating a troublesome mindset and its resultant ethical decisions.

Buddhist ethics are in line with Liberalism's intention to protect the individual's right to a more enlightened life experience. Buddhist ethics and Liberalism envision social institutional structures that would promote the individual right to be directed on the basis of a freedom of conscience to realize his or her highest good. In this respect many Buddhists are now advocating that the focus on individual Enlightenment be expanded into advising constituents on how to adjust to globalization's impact on the individual's attempt at Right Livelihood.

The Buddhist economic approach creates personal growth and prosperity in ways compatible with increased over-all well-being and sustainability by offering the "Middle Way" (or balance). By adhering to principles that promote "Enlightenment" not only as an individual experience, but also as a social awakening a person develops a healthy mind that conceives of good economics as an increase in personal and social benefits. By perfecting the principles prescribed in the Eightfold Path the troublesome mindset is corrected and a person develops a healthy mind-set. By perfecting the principles prescribed in the Eightfold Path a person creates life enhancing interactions (increases prosperity, promotes human flourishing and is well-integrated with the environment).

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[21] Medagoda Sumanatissa, "Buddhism and Global Economic Justice," Business Ethics, 12-9-2003, 1.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

**Saju Chackalackal, ed.,** ***New Horizons of Indian Christian Living*****:** ***A Festschrift in Honour of Prof. Dr. Vadakethala Francis Vineeth CMI*****,** Bengaluru and Coimbatore: Vidyavanam Publications and Preshitha Communications, 2009, pages xii + 932, Rs. 900.00; US $ 50.00.

This history-making and all-comprehensive study in honour of an eminent Indologist, philosopher and an *Acharya* of Indian spirituality, an original and inspiring thinker and writer, and a lover of Indian Christian *yoga*, is a monumental work. It is, indeed, a creative and scholarly contribution in the field of Indian approaches to the Bible, Indian Christian theology, inculturation and the Indian Church, Indian spirituality and Indian Christian paradigms of philosophical synthesis. The editor and all those who had worked behind this project deserve the wholehearted commendation and gratitude of the Indian and Asian Churches. A review article cannot do justice to make an exhaustive appraisal of this work. I limit myself to introduce the world of the *New Horizons of Indian Christian Living* to the readers. The title itself will challenge and provoke every Indian who is a Christian. The editor has succeeded in bringing together almost all colleagues, associates, friends and some of the disciples of Francis Vineeth (henceforth FV).

The *Festschrift* begins with an introduction by the editor. It is divided into six parts. Part One sheds light on the person and mission of FV. He himself has written the first article entitled "In Search of the Ineffable" (5-36). This is the best presentation of the charismatic, mystical, and poetical personality of the *Acharya*. Citing *Rgveda* I.164.37, the author makes his own the search of the Ineffable. He tells us about his search of the Ashram spirituality and contemplative prayer, and his experience of the revealing concealing dynamics of the Ineffable. There was an evolution from the Ashram ideal to the reality of *Vidyavanam*, in the ambience of which he seeks God-realization (*Īsvara sākshātkāra*) and self-realization (*ātmasākshātkāra*) under the protective wings of the Holy Spirit and the loving guidance of Mother Mary. He describes his journey to the Ineffable as a journey through the dark light of faith which takes humans to experience the visible face of God. FV concludes his narration in poetic form, which thus ends:

> "Until that day, lighting all the flames of my little lamp,
> I will wait for you, singing:

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The heavens magnify the Lord!
My soul too magnifies the Lord my God!"

Next, the editor makes us familiar with the milestones in the life and writings of FV (37-48). Then, S. Chackalackal provides his own interpretation of FV's venturing steps to reach the *New Horizons of Indian Christian Living* (49-84). L. Malieckal, an intimate friend of FV draws his portrait of the man and the mystic (85-102). Karuna Vadakethala, one of the sisters of FV, shares with us her happy remembrances of her brother (103-110). J. Nandhikkara leads us to the knowing and becoming dynamics at Vidyavanam Chapel (111-126). S. Elavathingal provides a spirituality of creative space (127-132). A. Naduveettil, a disciple of FV, looks at *Ashram* as a symbol of Indian spirituality and values (133-156). In the concluding article of part one F. X. Vellanikkaran invites us to experience the divine at Vidyavanam Ashram (157-164).

Part Two is entitled "Indian Approaches to the Bible." The articles, however, does not strictly deal with that theme. Readers are enlightened about many comparative themes. P. S. Pudussery looks at the discipleship in the Indian and Christian traditions (167-187). He finds many points of convergence and divergence. "Total surrender and unconditional obedience to the *guru* is the hallmark in both traditions" (186). In Indian and biblical thinking, human life is taken to be a "journey to God." T. Kollamparampil presents the biblical figure of Samson, according to the interpretation of Jacob Serugh, as an inspiring model for all struggling Christians (189-204). J. P. Kakkanattu gives the biblical perspective of "Littleness and Lowliness as a Channel of God's Grace" (205-216). A. Pushparajan studies "A New Family Horizon of Understanding the Bible" (217-242). J. Marangattu reflects on the figure of Mary Magdalene as the model for re-generated penitents (243-252). B. Nalkara studies "Pauline Cosmic Christology and Indian Eco-Spirituality" (253-268). According to him, Paul offers an adequate Christian eco-spirituality in the Indian context. The prayer of *Atharva Veda* 12:1, according to him, should become the mantra and motto of the Indian eco-spirituality.

"Indian Christian Theology" is the theme of part three. A. M. Mundadan, one of the architects of the *Garden of Dharma* writes on "Dharmaram: History and Vision" (271-298). The author tries to give articulation to the dream behind the venture of Dharmaram and its contributions in the field of inculturation in art, architecture, music, cultural performances, theology, and spirituality. A. Thannippara reflects on an Indian Christology by making a critical study of the persons of *Isvara* and Christ (299-324). A. Kalliath introduces a very relevant theme for the missions, namely, "Retelling the Story of Jesus through the Stories of People" (325-348). Such retelling implies "reinterpretation of the Gospel through stories, parables, and narratives of people's struggles." J. A. Samarakone deals with the theme "Vision of God for Humanity and the Universe" (349-366). He observes that the early Church never called Jesus 'God'. For the success of inter-religious dialogue, Christians have to "bring back the *father* to the central stage and bring about a change in their psyche." G. Thadathil enlightens us on encountering non-dualism in Jesus the Buddha (367-386). Christians are committed to follow the path of the cross and the self-emptying path of *vipassana*. F. Kanichikattil speaks of a liturgical paradigm in the Indian context (387-402).

Part Four on "Inculturation and the Indian Church" consists of eight studies. K. Pathil focuses his attention on the "Ongoing Inculturation and the Indian Churches" (405-420). He observes that the existing plurality of Churches in India wants to become more and more authentically Indian and truly Christian. Unfortunately, they are overburdened and fettered by their own past and practically in the dark not knowing the directions ahead. The country eagerly waits for a genuine fecundation of the Gospel in the Indian soil. P. Kalluveettil presents in a concise and precise form the inculturation perspectives in the Bible (421-432). S. Athappilly studies "Inculturation in the Model of Incarnation" (433-452). Bishop G. Karotemprel dwells on the theme "Pastoral Care of Migrants" (453-471). J. P. Muringathery, an expert in the field of dialogue, writes on "Inter-religious Fellowship" (473-484). He finds that the bonds that unite us are stronger than the barriers that separate us. A. Amarnad makes us aware of the eternal fragrance of music on earth (485-501). He opines that inculturation is the foundation of indigenized music. J. Kuriedath studies the contributions of the Indian pioneers for the socio-economic and cultural development (505-534). J. Shawn presents his reflections on Indian Church under the title "Break the Anthill against the Freak Globalization" (535-542).

Part Five is dedicated to the theme of Indian spirituality. K. Waaijman, under the title "Experience: A Bridge between Spiritualities?" makes this conclusion: "... from the perspective of the fulfilment all bridges will appear to be relative and the artefacts of human beings" (545-556). A. Thottakara, a Sanskrit scholar, finds *sannyāsa* as the dynamics of a life of renunciation (557-582). This is, indeed, a scientific study of the theme. T. Aykara looks at the consecrated priesthood as a spiritual pro-presence, a human pro-presence and a pilgrimage in integration (583-590). A. Puthenangady writes on priestly spirituality (591-602). T. Manickam argues for a Christian holistic spirituality, which takes the universe as a "divine milieu" (603-622). We have to identify Jesus in all human beings as the 'holistic means' for eternal glory. H. Overzee introduces *saraṇa* as a spiritual formation project (623-637). For her *saraṇa* is establishing our inner refuge. We have to awaken to who we are in relationship. P. Kochappilly articulates "Christian Mysticism of the Mystery of Christ" (639-662). It is falling in love with the love of God revealed in Christ and accompanied by the Holy Spirit. According to K. Perumpallikunnel, mystical experience is the fount and *raison d'etre* of *sannyāsa* (663-684). A. Vattakuzhy writes on spirituality of interiority (685-696). The author's conclusion is worth citing: "The path to interiority is a path to one's inner self in the Divine Self, the ultimate principle of one's being. The realization of the union of these two selves makes the inward journey complete." Under the title "Ecologies of Mysticism," O. Inchody presents Benedict of Nursia, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi, and Teilhard de Chardin as models for greening *Ashram* spirituality (697-713). J. Valiyakulathil seeks the Indian roots of spiritual direction (715-740). Jesus the *Sadguru* stands out as the supreme paradigm. The author also studies the modern dynamics of formation and spiritual direction, and concludes: "A good, holy and masterly guidance of spiritual direction can bring about great transformation in the candidates." J. P. Palakkapallil advocates for a spirituality that is in tune with nature (741-751). As a conclusion on the articles of Part Five, one can say that most of the authors provide valuable insights into the theme of Indian spirituality.

The final part is entitled "Indian Christian Paradigms of Philosophical Synthesis," a subject which is very dear to FV. Ten authors present their reflections concerning this theme. C. Kanichai, a renowned Indian philosopher, studies the philosophical perspective of religious experience (755-761). The scholar beautifully gives articulation to the concept of a true philosophy of Existence: "It connects us with Being and existents – with God, humans, and the universe – not in opposition and isolation but in mutual co-existence and pro-existence. This would give rise to a state of communion, communication, and community in regard to God, humans, and universe, which would relate us vertically to Existence and collaterally to the existents." T. Kochumuttom, whom one can call a *baktha-jñana yogi*, tries to establish the mutual complementariness of *yoga* experience and Christian mysticism by making a Christian reading of Patañjali's *yoga-sutra* (763-790). This is, indeed, a scholarly contribution in the field of Indian Christian philosophy. G. Kulangara writes on the role of speculative philosophy in Indian religious formation (791-804). According to him, "the ultimate purpose of philosophical training is to bring a student to the humility of reason whereby one lets go of one's insistence on own perspectives." P. Kattukaran, an expert in Indian art, entitles his study as "Being Christian and Artistic in India" (805-823). According to him, every one "lives as an artist and if his basic story is about God in Christ, then he is a Christian... The more one is a Christian the greater his responsibility to live the story of Christ, i.e., to be an artist Christian." P. C. Chittilappilly develops one of the maxims of Francis of Assisi: "*Tantum homo, habet de scientia, quantum operatur*" (825-842). W. Edattukaran searches in Gandhian gospels patterns for Indian Christian living (843-854). The author finds in Gandhi the gospels of truth, fearlessness, faith, non-violence, *sathyāgraha*, *sarvodaya*, and love. S. G. Kochuthara tries to look at the experience of the Divine by studying the symbolism of the sensual and the spiritual (885-884). According to him, "spirituality bereft of relatedness and intimacy is not spirituality, neither in marital life nor in celibate life. The symbolism of the sensual and the spiritual in different religious traditions underscores this basic dimension of human person and divine experience." J. Ethakuzhy studies the theme of "The *Ashram* Ideal and Spirituality of the *Gita*" (885-893). Unfortunately, this very enlightening article is sketchy. The author, thus, concludes his reflections: "The integral and liberative spirituality of the *Bhagavat Gīta* can be the guiding light for a Christian *Ashram*." R. Palatty's attempt is to rehabilitate the question of Being and Existence (895-910). This study is an analysis of FV's book *Foundations of World Vision: A Guide to Metaphysics Eastern and Western*. T. Cyriac entitles her study as "In the Garden of Education: An Indian Christian Synthesis" (911-922). "God is love and love should be the ambience and atmosphere of any programme of education." She unveils the manifestative dimension of the Divine in education. In this concluding article of the *Festschrift*, T. Cyriac, who is gifted with the flower-language of consciousness, takes us into the garden of education.

The editor does not allow us to wander in the vast oasis of fruitful investigations. We should be very grateful to him for the index of important subjects and persons (923-932). The Indian Church is very much indebted to Saju Chackalackal and his team for offering such rich, creative, intuitive, experiential, and thought-provoking contributions in the fields of Indian Christian theology, inculturation, spirituality, and paradigms. Let me conclude this overview on *New Horizons of Indian Christian Living* by citing the words of the editor about FV: "This *guru* founds his authority on his inner being, which emerges from his profound learning of the holy books (*veda pānḍityam*), wisdom on the realities of the world (*vidvān*), and the steadfast anchoring in the supreme Brahman (*Bhramaniṣhṭha*): all these come from his foundational experience (*anubhava*) which makes him original and creative" (83). Let us thank God, the *Satcitānanta* for his ineffable gift of FV for India.

**Paul Kalluveettil**

**Roy Varghese Palatty, *Cathedrals of Development: A Critique on the Developmental Model of Amartya Sen*,** Bangalore, India: Christ University Publications, 2009, pages: xxxiv + 227.

One may consider the 1998 Nobel Prize winner for the economic sciences someone who contributed tremendously, if not most, to bring ethics into the household of the economist, while still doing economics at its best. A profile of Amartya Sen in *The Guardian* wrote that the strongest point of his work, a definite link between his economics and philosophy, was ethics and a sense of common humanity. He argued for enhancing people's substantial freedoms and equalizing conditions for their realization, understood poverty as absence of freedoms and not goods, showed how there can be famine in a world even when food production increased, and advised governments and international bodies on how to make globalization work in favour of the world's least. However, the author of the book, *Cathedrals of Development: A Critique on the Developmental Model of Amartya Sen*, Roy Varghese Palatty, thinks otherwise. A stern voice of dissent – that is what is interesting about this book.

The reader, if she wants to profit from engaging with *Cathedrals*, should get into the groove of Palatty's stance right from the outset, and for this, the introducing essay of Saju Chackalackal, "Freedom, Justice, and Globalization" (xi-xxxiv) is a sure pair of glasses. Chackalackal raises a number of important threads that resound throughout Palatty's work. Sacredness of the individual and her freedom, a gift of Enlightenment thought, is at the origin of the assumption of self-interest that drives the economic sciences. This line of thought receives credibility under the umbrella of the Protestant ethic and stays put at the heart of capitalism up to its neoliberal current forms. Chackalackal points out that all eyes are not closed against this turn of events. He refers to the Marxist challenge and the social teachings of the Catholic Church, but thinks that the tide never really turned but only took even a more vicious form in globalized capitalism. Amartya Sen is awake to injustice and inequality, hunger and famine, but nevertheless thinks as an economist that global capitalism holds within it some finer solution which is yet to unfold. Chackalackal tells us that *Cathedrals*' main argument is the inherent impossibility of capitalism and its myriad forms to meet the demands of justice. Freedom is not justice, and pursuing it blindly is injustice to the being of the Other; neoliberal freedom is irresponsible being.

The prominent word 'cathedral' in the title of Palatty's work refers to theorization without a sense of concrete realities on the ground. The argument is that conceptualization of development should be awake to meeting the demands of justice, justice for the victims of social injustice, a life for the least advantaged, rather than a philosophy of freedom for all. From this stance, Palatty wants to convince the reader that theoretical apparatuses like Sen's are 'cathedrals' that jar with the landscape of unjust drudgery prevalent around it. 'Cathedral' is a satirical metaphor used against theoretical gigantism, cure-alls churned out of the economist's mill, i.e., metanarratives in postmodern language.

*Cathedrals* is fundamentally a critique of the 'individual freedom thesis' of modernism. Palatty accuses Sen's work as ideologically neoliberal, but his own text is not ideologically neutral (Can any text be? Can Marx, Foucault, and Derrida be untrue even in this?). The ideology of the Dalit and subaltern movements, in general, weighs heavy in his analysis (33; see the author's preface as well). I want to suggest that *Cathedrals* can be assessed best as a particular reading of Sen's contributions from the perspective now generically termed as 'development ethics'. The introduction, "Freedom to Choose?" emphasizes that, for Sen, freedom is everything, the means and the end, the process and the goal, the way and the destination, the *marga* and the *mokṣa*. Needless to say, Sen is thus firmly placed within the liberal tradition. From the word go, Palatty has problems with "the so-called 'absolute way' of dealing with the economics proclaimed by capitalists and neo-liberalists" (7). He does not believe in a single mega story, a single closed cathedral that takes all. "We need to shift away from the 'cathedral model' of growth, with its closed, top-down influence, to the 'bazaar model', to an open-source model of development" (7). Individual freedom achieved through development processes is not enough, and so "Being-for-oneself needs to be transformed into being-for-others" (7). The reader should bear in mind that this is a constant thread that binds Palatty's critical study in development ethics.

From here on, Palatty's analysis tries to show how Sen's model, cantered on the idea of freedom, is about the opportunities of free market and the development such opportunities claim brings about. For him, the ontology of the 'self' is an interface of the personal and the social, and so freedom is not merely individual privilege or achievement, but primarily responsibility towards others. "Effective freedom can be brought out by the interventions of responsible communities and governments" (26). This being the case, Palatty questions Sen's belief that global development, which is but capability expansion in individual lives, can be achieved through hailing the "freedom to enter into exchange relationship through market relations" (66). *There have to be 'social curbs' on free-being, whether it is market relations, consumption patterns or individual behaviour*. I think, this is the central thesis of Palatty's work, which, I am sure, should attract the critical gaze of liberals, anarchists, and non-Statists. Sen's favouring of market and international capitalist organizations do not account for their evils, Palatty complains (78). This vein of critique does not spare Sen's idea of democracy as deliberation and multiparty elections mediated by a free press. For him, Sen does not account for democracy as a tyranny of the majority (83). Further, Sen does not list a set of basic capabilities for all societies, unlike Nussbaum. According to Palatty, this is a direct assault on his idea of 'social curbs' on freedom (90). Similarly, he thinks that Sen does not take into account social exclusion, inherited inequality and caste issues, which are all assaults on Palatty's 'social curbs' thesis. To that extent, for Palatty, Sen is ambivalent regarding the field from where the free bird can fly, the ground of freedom itself, the minimum social security required for freedom to be freedom in the first place. Palatty does not suggest solutions like social support of basic education, employment, minimum wage guarantee or such steps, for he tells us on page 6 that his is not a strategic study with an eye on the blind spots of social policy. Probably, if he did, I think, he would have found himself repeating at least a few solutions that Sen himself suggested. But Palatty's bone of contention is simple: if Sen is sure that neoclassical economic solutions cannot work too well for developing nations, why does he still flow with the neoliberals and think that there can be a radical turn within that tradition itself in favour of the world's poor? (107). Really, you need to throw the baby with the bath water; you cannot change a tradition remaining within itself; you cannot reform from within; you have to come out of the 'cathedral' to the open 'bazaar' to wear a different thinking cap. At least some readers may think this is but intellectual Puritanism.

Hence, the third chapter of the book on development and justice is crucial. I should call the reader's attention to pages 122-123. "Sen's success is his ecumenism (bringing together and synthesising various traditions that were traditionally considered incompatible); failure is his forgetfulness of the ground realities." Sen is also accused of being unimaginative regarding the question of identity and of sweeping under the carpet the question of identity in his individualist, universalist fervour. "His rationality never brings him to see the 'historical woundedness' of the marginalised, which created certain societies in the name of caste, colour, creed, etc." But Palatty notes that when it is the question of identity assertion, there needs to be a distinction carefully drawn between identity assertion of the marginalized and of the dominant communities. But he does not explain why this is indeed the case. Vis-à-vis Sen's grant universalism, Palatty prefers Rawls' national particularism (132-133). He is surprised that Sen turns away from the abstraction of the capability approach and proposes a comparative and down-to-earth theory of justice in *The Idea of Justice* (141). On the other hand, insightful readers may be surprised why this cannot be considered Sen's own turn to account for the very concerns Palatty himself raises. He justifiably asks how Sen can know *a priori* what is just and unjust without an adequate and transcendental conception of justice, like that of Rawls. But to suggest that Sen's abandoning of the difficult search after the ideal is to justify unjust institutions and 'continue to stand up with the neo-liberals' (142) is to go way overboard. Palatty would prefer the formulation 'development as justice' rather than Sen's 'development as freedom' (146), but does not tell us how justice becomes a conceptualization of development and not a strategy towards it. For Palatty, Sen's "vision of development is purely in terms of material prosperity and happiness" (125), and so he surely should have a different conception of development. "Genuine progress is the progress of a human being in his or her network of relations according to the cosmic rhythms" (126). Truly, such a definitional distinction separates the two conceptualizations radically.

*Cathedrals*' final chapter, "Freedom and Justice in the Market Economy," makes clear Palatty's communitarian assumptions: "an individual has no existence apart from his or her community" (162). This chapter has stray references to the hermeneutics of the social self as in Heidegger (164). Further, he thinks that Sen does not have a concept of moral otherness, probably as in Levinas (163). Could Charles Taylor be an important omission here? Given his communitarian stance, Palatty prefers the nation state's hegemony (165) and a globalization from below (169); rather than a freedom-oriented commitment to development, a justice-oriented commitment (172). He fears that humanity is travelling towards a conscience anaesthetic towards the tears of the poor (173) and fears for the violence that could follow from this (174). Not that he does not prescribe solutions; he does, but they are suggestive and 'pluralist' in the sense of being not theoretically cohesive. Palatty wants a radically transformed and socially just economics more in tune with Gandhian philosophy and ecology. He calls for self-reliance without dependency syndrome, a movement from freedom to justice based on a conception of the person-in-community rather than the atomised individual. When the reader would hope that the market and business corporations will disappear in such a conception, Palatty does raise the issue of corporate social responsibility. His conclusion hopes for a new humanism and not a posthumanism. His thesis finally is not a new theory of development, for he believes there is none. So, his attempt is to warn the reader against Sen's proposed third way between economic orthodoxy and its leftist challenge: "His theorizing in favour of the reforms in the social sector and his call for building up individual capabilities will be mistaken if we do not recognize that at the bottom he is a neo-liberal whose advocacy in the present global scenario has the effect of making the empire and its market-agenda as the only plausible course for justice in the world and the wellbeing of the poor" (207).

*Cathedrals* refers to a rich store of for-and-against literature on the liberal egalitarian economic views, even to the recent *The Idea of Justice*

(2009). Similarly, the author's single-minded attack on liberal-egalitarian position on economic justice is bold and very lucid.

But *Cathedrals* is a desultory essay. While Sen is an economic liberal, Palatty is a 'philosophical liberal' in the sense that he does not really reveal what his philosophical position is. Hence, he occupies a vast space and directs his criticism from varied positions, without privileging any position for himself. Many philosophically oriented readers would think it is a weakness, but Palatty claims it as his strength. In his critical enthusiasm, Palatty occasionally misses finer nuances. For example, Sen claims only 'moral individualism' – the claim that the individual is the final unit of moral evaluation. Sen is neither an ontological nor a methodological individualist. His work is constantly aware of the sociality of the individual and how social and political agency can be put to effective use. But his argument is, if social agency finally does not increase the individual's capability, it cannot figure in moral evaluation, despite its general usefulness. Palatty does not completely miss this point. For example, he notes that, for Sen, China and India have different sets of social conditions that can make globalization work for or against the least advantaged (40-41). However, he misses the point that Sen is using this evidence to suggest that the democratic setup of India needs to be more socially transformative. Similarly, Palatty attacks Sen's pro-market, pro-globalization stances, with simultaneous acknowledgment of Sen's belief in taming the market for everyone's interest (59).

Yet, we are not completely clear how Palatty differs from Sen except in detail. Both seem to be looking for economic freedom with justice. But Palatty fears that the danger lies with the unregulated market. We are sure about Sen's liberal-egalitarian stance, whereas we are unsure of Palatty's political plain. So, there can be no answer to the question 'what are the consequences of Palatty's views, say, on the regulation of market'. Will this be a completely regulated market with the State owning the means of production – a rigorously socialist vision? Or, would it be complete communism? We have no clues in this regard. Certainly, Palatty is not even for a transformed neo-liberalism. To claim that you are for nothing would be a vulnerable position for a sound critique. I referred to Palatty's ideological baggage earlier, but from that position alone we are not sure what political and economic consequences can be drawn. His mixing up of Gandhian economics of self-reliance with responsible corporation is an interesting twist, but without exploring that curious terrain enough, the book ends.

*Cathedrals*, in my view, cannot be read as an *appraisal* of Sen's work but a thoroughgoing, hard-hitting critique, and in the words of another famed Nobel laureate, Joseph Stiglitz, "it brings out a lucid and convincing critique on the current trends in the developmental economics and global market forces" (see the book's back cover). Palatty raises the anti-globalization, anti-market, anti-materialist, anti-liberalist sword against Sen's work with a passion rarely seen in the genre of philosophical criticism. To my mind, the purpose of Palatty's tirade is to call forth economic ethics to a radical turn. But, as is well known, if liberalism wants to avoid anything, it is radicalism of both the right and the left variety. Palatty is unclear where he wants to pitch his tent, whether on the political left or the right. To that extent, his radical intentions lose steam. Further, I think, despite Palatty's worthy intentions, Sen deserves much more than radical passion, i.e., a more theoretically sound critique. However, the book's value is not merely in its critique of Sen. For a long time, 'development ethics' did not know what to do without the capability approach. Interestingly and justifiably, there is a current stream of literature to challenge the monopoly of the capability approach. *Cathedrals* is an important contribution to this stream of literature, and so, it deserves a wide spectrum of readers.

**Siby K. George**

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